



New Study by the Gluten Intolerance Group Finds “Gluten-Removed” Beer May Be Unsafe for People with Celiac Disease

AUBURN, Wash. (Feb. 14, 2017)—A new research study conducted by the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG), the leader in the certification of gluten-free products and food services, indicates that beers labeled “gluten-removed” may not be safe for those with celiac disease. A first of its kind, the pilot [study](#), “The Celiac Patient Antibody Response to Conventional and Gluten-Removed Beer,” was published online by the *Journal of AOAC International*, and was conducted by GIG at the University of Chicago’s Celiac Research Center. It used blood samples from individuals with celiac disease to see whether the proteins in gluten-free beer and gluten-removed beer were recognized by antibodies that were already present in the blood. It was found that no blood samples reacted to the gluten-free beer. However, a percentage of blood samples did react to the gluten-removed beer.

Both gluten-free and gluten-removed beers have entered the marketplace recently. Gluten-free beer is made using grains that naturally do not contain gluten, such as sorghum or brown rice, in the fermentation process. Gluten-removed beer is made with wheat, barley or rye, and it then undergoes a process for the gluten to be removed. The removal process uses enzymes to break down gluten into smaller fragments that theoretically may not induce an immune response in the person who drinks it.

“The medical and scientific community has not validated or accepted that these low-gluten or gluten-removed beers are safe because available gluten testing methods have not been sufficiently accurate with fermented and hydrolyzed products,” said Cynthia Kupper, CEO of GIG. “That is why we conducted this first-of-its-kind study, because even if one person with celiac reacts to gluten-removed beers, it shows it would not be appropriate to certify this product category according to our standards.”

“We are committed to continuing these types of studies to assure our customers that the decisions we are making are valid,” Kupper said. “This study was done as a proof of concept of the methodology. Our hope is a bigger study will be conducted to provide an even bigger picture of the possible risk of these products to the gluten-free community.”

About the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG)

The Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association funded by private donations, fundraising, sponsorship opportunities and industry programs. It relies on tax-deductible contributions to support its many innovative industry, service, social and awareness programs. GIG has been a highly respected leader in the Gluten-Free community since it was founded in 1974. In addition to more than 70 local branches across the United States, GIG has increased its presence internationally to over 29 countries. GIG empowers the gluten-free community through consumer support, advocacy and education.

The [Gluten-Free Certification Organization](#) (GFCO), a program of GIG, is a leader in the verification of quality, integrity and purity of gluten-free products. The [Gluten-Free Food Service](#) (GFFS) Certification Program is a proven model of established best practices for food service facilities offering gluten-free options. GIG is committed to ongoing food safety research to assure customers and consumers the highest level of excellence in its gluten-free programs and services. For information, visit www.gluten.org.

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