



University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research

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A SWEET TREAT FOR CELIAC PATIENTS WILL BENEFIT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CENTER FOR CELIAC RESEARCH

Before licking a popsicle or swallowing a spoonful of a sundae, children and adults with celiac disease must make sure that their treat is gluten-free. Now, a Florida-based novelty ice cream company that makes gluten-free products, PhillySwirl, has teamed up with the internationally recognized University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research in Baltimore to raise money for research that may lead to a cure. The company will donate 50 cents for each UPC label from PhillySwirl collected by the center.

"The only way for people with celiac disease to prevent an adverse reaction and damage to their intestines is to avoid all foods that contain the protein gluten," says Alessio Fasano, M.D., director of the Center for Celiac Research and professor of pediatrics, medicine and physiology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Max Lapin and Alex Plotkin, co-founders PhillySwirl, learned that many people want to know if a product contains gluten. "We received many calls from parents saying their child was on a 'gluten-free' diet due to celiac disease, and they asked whether our products contained anything made with, or from, wheat, rye or barley," says Mr. Plotkin.

Anxious to find the answer, the pair tested their products for gluten, as well as peanuts and tree nuts. All products were free of peanuts and tree nuts, while almost all were gluten-free. This testing sparked an interest for both Mr. Lapin and Mr. Plotkin. They started educating themselves about celiac disease and learned about the University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research. That led them to do something even sweeter.

"Max and Alex have made it their mission to fund our research, which is focused on finding a cure for celiac disease—the most common genetic disorder in the world. That is an incredible commitment for a company that came to serve this community purely by accident," adds Dr. Fasano, who also heads the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology at the University of Maryland Hospital for Children.

To help with the fund-raising effort, people can send PhillySwirl UPC labels to:

Center for Celiac Research
CFCR – PhillySwirl
22 S. Greene Street
Box 104
Baltimore, MD 21201