

IBS Treatment Center Newsletter

1229 Madison Street, Suite 1220, Seattle, Washington 98104 (206) 264-1111 www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com

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Feeding the Family: What You and Your Child's Caregiver Need to Know about Food and Health

By Dr. Stephen Wangen

A recent article in the New York Times discussed the difficulty in feeding children. In particular, the article was about the dietary restrictions that parents often give a child's caregiver. Caregivers can easily become frustrated or overwhelmed by these seemingly random instructions. And a lack of understanding can breed resentment or mistrust.

Parents want their kids to be healthy. And being a parent and particular about my child's diet, I can relate. Difficulties in communicating dietary needs can crop up with other family members (spouse, grandparents, and relatives) as well as nannies, teachers, and daycare workers. With a little help (and maybe even having them read this article) you will be able to

prevent some stress and provide your child a healthy diet.

Eating is one of the most fundamental things that we do. Yet it is often appalling how little thought goes into the health consequences of what we eat. Many Americans fill their diet with foods that never even existed until the advent of companies that "made" food. These include processed meats, breakfast cereals, condiments, sauces, toppings, chips, boxed food, plastic wrapped food, etc - basically everything that's not on the perimeter of the grocery store. In order to make food more profitable we have added chemicals, mixed in bulk or flavor, and concocted new things to eat.

But you may ask, what's wrong with that? It's not necessarily all bad, but most of these foods are virtually guaranteed to be lower in nutritional value than the real thing – the food prior to processing. And processed foods are often full of items that our bodies were never meant to ingest – preservatives, artificial colors, artificial flavors, nitrites, sulfites, artificial sweeteners and other additives.

Processed foods are also typically high in salt or sugar. A huge number of processed foods contain sugar – ketchup, mayonnaise, peanut butter, jam, breakfast cereal, bread, and the list goes on. Read the labels and you'll get the idea.



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All of these negatively impact our health and the health of our children. If you don't think that these things have anything to do with health, then consider that in America we spend far more than any other country on health care, and we have one of the most technologically advanced medical systems in the world. Yet we are not even ranked in the top 35 countries in the world when it comes to overall health.

But avoiding processed foods and eating healthier foods is really just the tip of the iceberg. When it comes to health there are generic recommendations such as the ones above, and then there are recommendations specific to the health of each individual. We are each unique, and the way our body responds to food is dependent upon our unique genetic makeup and other factors.

This brings up the issue of food intolerances and food allergies. This is one of the most complicated and misunderstood issues in health and nutrition.

Food allergies and intolerances are far more common than most people realize. In fact, at least half the population probably has a food allergy or intolerance. Food allergies and intolerances cause all variety of health problems, including behavioral changes, both in kids and adults. These include asthma, acne, anxiety, colic, eczema, constipation, diarrhea, abdominal pain, headaches, fatigue, insomnia, migraines, poor growth, heartburn, irritability, and many other problems.

Many people are surprised to learn that the symptoms of a food allergy can be something other than what we typically think of, such as itchy skin, hives, or swelling of the lips or tongue. In fact, most people who have food allergies do not have these symptoms, but have long-lasting or recurring symptoms including those mentioned above.



Parents are often the first to notice the relationship between their child's health and their diet. Occasionally they are fortunate enough to have a physician who also recognizes these problems. But physicians are poorly trained in this area and all too often do not appreciate the relationship between food and health. And unfortunately, conventional skin testing for food allergies often misses what is in fact an allergic reaction to food.

Once you know that your child has a reaction to a food, it is obvious to you that your child's health is much better when he or she is avoiding that food. This improvement may not be evident to everyone else, especially when it is something subtle such as a behavioral change or is a difficult to notice symptom such as constipation.

An extremely important part of avoiding a reactive food is being consistent. People often don't realize the extent to which a food should be avoided if it makes someone ill, even if it is not a life-threatening allergy. For example, say your child needs to avoid dairy. Dairy involves more than milk and cheese. Dairy includes butter, sour cream, casein and whey. It is found in bread, chocolate, muffins, soups, and hundreds of other food items.

The full benefit of avoiding a food won't be realized unless there is 100% avoidance. And frequently it takes 100% avoidance of a food to know that it is (was) the cause of the problem. Quantity is also not necessarily the issue. Many kids (and adults) are affected by tiny amounts of a food. Just because it is hidden in another food and you can't see it doesn't mean it isn't there. You can't see a virus either, but you know it's bad for you.

Of course, avoiding a food comes can come with social consequences. Friends and relatives may take it personally if you don't want to eat their food, or if you don't want your child to eat their food. And they may

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find it difficult to believe that it is truly an important health issue.

It is not uncommon for people to say, "A little bit won't hurt." "You can eat it just this once." When people say that, they don't necessarily realize that they are doing you or your child harm. And when you make it clear that a little bit is not OK, they may act temporarily offended, but they will also get the message. And usually you will both be happier in the long run.

Of course, they may try the same tactic again and again. And you'll have to remain strong, because if a little bit is OK, then they can challenge you with "what's wrong with a little more." And before you know it you've lost all credibility and they've lost all interest.

So be strong and trust your instincts. As a parent you generally know what's best for your child. And if you need some help, find a physician who can support you and help you track down the problem.

*Dr. Stephen Wangen is the founder of the IBS Treatment Center and the Center for Food Allergies. His newly published book is titled *The Irritable Bowel Syndrome Solution*. For more information about Dr. Wangen or his clinics visit <http://www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com> and www.CenterforFoodAllergies.com.*



We Want to Hear from You!

Tell us what you are learning and/or how you have overcome IBS. Even share your best recipes or shopping tips! Whether personal or purely informative, we want your input. You may see it in a future issue of our newsletter! Send stories to:

Info@IBSTreatmentCenter.com

Want to hear more from Dr. Wangen? Check out his [blog!](#) Updated regularly.

<http://www.ibstreatmentcenter.com/blog/index.htm>

New Celiac Awareness Group:

The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) is determined to gain a prompt and correct diagnosis for all Americans who have celiac disease. To this end, NFCA is launching a national awareness campaign, and they need your help! See their website at <http://www.CeliacCentral.org> or write to Founder and Executive Director Alice Bast at info@celiaccentral.org for more information.

Calendar:

October: Free Workshop

For people with diabetes and wheat/gluten allergies or celiac disease

Date: Saturday Oct 14, 2006

Time: 10:00 – noon

Location: Puyallup Eagles #2308
202 – 5th St NW
Puyallup

Contact: Please RSVP to Pierce County
Diabetes Assoc. 253-272-5134

Speakers:

Cynthia Kupper, RD, GIG Executive
Director

Becky Blodgett, RN

Gluten Free Pie Crust Demonstration!

Hosted by the Bellingham Gluten Intolerance Group

Date: Saturday, November 4, 2006

Time: 11 AM to 3 PM, Presentation by Kaili
McIntyre at 12 PM

Location: Ferndale Senior Center, on Cherry
St. by Pioneer Park, Ferndale, WA

Admission: Free! Everyone welcome!

Contacts: Kelle A. Rankin-Sunter: 332-7435
or Caroline Yorkston: 676-1372

This year's speaker is Kaili McIntyre of Da Vinci's Cafe, in Seattle, WA. She will be demonstrating making a Gluten Free pie crust. Kaili, a trained baker, was shocked

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when she was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. She has since become a well-known expert in the field of Gluten Free baking and established one of the first "dedicated" gluten free baking/dining facilities in the United States.

In addition to the featured speaker:

- Gluten-Free refreshments and manufacturer's samples/coupons
- Gluten Free Book & Bake Sale
- Silent Auction
- Tom Maltere of Whole Life Nutrition to answer questions
- Resource/Information Table and Donors Drawing

November: IBS Support Group

Studies show that 50 million Americans are living with IBS! You're not alone and although it can feel hopeless, it *is* possible to be rid of it! Visit our group for support and get some answers!

Most meetings attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and author of *The Irritable Bowel Syndrome Solution*. The group meets on the **first Tuesday of every month at the IBS Treatment Center.**

[Click here for details.](#)

November: GIG (Gluten Intolerance Group) Support Group

There is always something new to learn about living with Gluten intolerance. New products and research are coming out all the time! Come to the Central Seattle chapter of GIG and here the latest while enjoying the company of others living the GF lifestyle.

Meetings are held on the **2nd Wednesday of each month at the IBS Treatment Center** (co-located with the Center for Food Allergies) and most will be attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and Center for Food Allergies.

[Click here for details.](#)

November: Gluten Free Gala

November 18th from 9am-6pm at Manna Mills! (21705 66th Ave W, Mountlake Terrace)



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