

HOW TO DEAL WITH...



Family and Friends that Just Don't Understand

This is an extremely sensitive area for some people, but what we want you to know, right from the start, is that you are NOT alone, nor should you feel guilty for trying to feed your family nutritious healthy meals. In fact, you should be extremely proud that you have made a conscious decision to do what is in the best interest of your family. Never feel guilty for feeding your family good food. Own it!

At the end of the day it is no one else's business what you are feeding your family, especially when that food is made from real ingredients, or is good old fashioned, home cooked food that contains nothing artificial.

Quite often, it's not that friends and family don't want to support you, or hurt your feelings, it's that they simply don't understand. To them a pack of smarties is just a treat, they really don't understand that they contain harmful chemicals linked to all sorts of side effects.

If you do feel the need to explain why you are restricting some foods from your diet, or your child's diet, then our recommendation is to just tell the truth - tell them that certain foods effect your child and the way they behave, or that some foods effect your asthma/eczema or whatever the case may be. We have found that by keeping it simple and not over complicating things, most people are quite open to listening and some actually want to know more.

Grandparents

One thing we hear all the time is *"what do I do about grandparents and in-laws?"* or *"I just feel like they never listen, I've told them not to give my kids lollies, but they always do"*. From our experience grandparents love to spoil their grandchildren and more often than not, this is with food.

It is really hard, we get it. It is a confronting thing telling your parents, or in-laws, what they can and can't feed your children, especially if they are doing you a favour, babysitting or the like. A great suggestion is, instead of food maybe they can give them some stickers, a colouring book or make some playdoh.

Our Advice

One of the best things we ever did with our own parents is sit them down and have that conversation. We explained that no matter how much junk food they bought our kids, they were not going to be remembered for that. But what they were going to be remembered for was all the fun things they did with our kids. We would rather our kids come home and say "Poppy let me help him in the shed" or "Nanny played puzzles with me all day today" and from that day on things changed and improved. We won't say it is perfect all the time, but it is a whole lot better.

Hopefully over time they will come around and see that you are not restricting their diets, but in fact improving their health.

If your child suffers from asthma and you restrict preservative 220 then explain why. Explain that dried fruits contain Sulphur Dioxide and that this is a well known preservative to effect people with asthma. Explain that you try your best to avoid this preservative so that your child is not as sick, needs their puffer less etc- you never know, they may just be interested in what you have to say.

Again, it all comes down to education - educating your children is one thing, but educating family members is another. They often don't see the meltdown after a bowl of flavoured chips, they are not up in the middle of the night because of nightmares or headaches, they are not the ones dealing with days off school because your child has vomited all night after eating KFC... (like Jo's daughter did).

But, if you continue to explain that these types of foods are affecting your child then maybe, just maybe, they might start to listen and take notice.

Here's what Jo and her husband did when they reached their breaking point:

- Told their parents, in-laws, other family and friends that they were going through an elimination diet and certain foods are no longer permitted.
- She asked everyone to please be supportive. Jo explained to them that this is important to her and that she would really appreciate their support. She asked them to not offer anything to her kids. This was hard, but it was important.
- Jo didn't feel ashamed or scared to reject chemically filled food. She held her head up high because she knew it was important for her kids to know that she was proud of what they were doing.
- She explained to her children, prior to going anywhere, that they may be offered food that isn't great and they would need to make a decision about it. She took her own snacks, lollies, chocolates, biscuits etc and explained to her kids that if someone offers them something with yucky additives we've packed some food they can have.
- She purchased items and took them to Grandma's house explained that these were the snacks her children were allowed.

It gets easier over time (we promise). As your children begin to realise the effects food can have on their health, or the way it makes them feel, they will start to say no to the bad stuff all by themselves.