



See No Evil - Hear No Evil - Speak No Evil - EAT NO EVIL

By Gladys Marietti

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The world of dining-out is dangerous for people (and sock monkeys) with food allergies. The same is true for anyone with Celiac's disease, gluten sensitivity, and other food intolerances/sensitivities.

Today my purpose is to educate you and give you practical information on how to handle these types of medically necessary situations in a restaurant setting.

- Who am I and why do I know about these issues.
- What are food allergies and other illnesses associated with food.
- Why food allergic people rarely eat out.
- Issues of cross-contamination.
- Responsibilities of customers.
- Responsibilities of food service professionals.

My information today comes from scientific sources as well as anecdotal stories shared by the food allergy community. I am a member of the American Dietetic Association, an Arizona certified food manager and a member of several food allergy and Celiac organizations.

WHO I AM AND WHY DO I KNOW ABOUT THESE ISSUES

My name is Gladys Marietti and I am 55 years old. In 2000, I was diagnosed with Celiac's disease, and multiple SEVERE food allergies as well as food intolerances. EAT NO EVIL in this context pertains to the foods that are dangerous for me, and others like me, to eat.

This is me:



I suffered for 20+ years with vague symptoms such as: Anxiety, Bloating, Depression, Fatigue, Headaches, Irritable bowel syndrome, Skin rashes, Stomach pain, Thyroid disease, Tooth enamel defects, Weight gain and loss to mention a few. Most of the medical professionals gave me various incorrect diagnosis such as: Arthritis, Chronic fatigue syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Lupus, Oh! And my favorite diagnosis from several doctors “You're just a stressed out Mom!!”

I became my own patient advocate and began to look for the real causes of my symptoms. When I found doctors that would listen and were knowledgeable, I was able to get diagnosed correctly.

I share this with you because the biggest thing that distresses people with any of these illnesses is **THEY ARE NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY!** This especially holds true in the restaurant world. Many people have no idea how food can dangerously impact someone's life.

Who Doesn't Love a Sock Monkey?
See No Evil - Hear No Evil - Speak No Evil - EAT NO EVIL

The source that popularized this pictorial maxim is a 17th century carving over a door of a famous shrine in Japan. The monkeys and the phrase were believed to incorporate Confucius's Code of Conduct including associations with being of good mind, speech and action.

In the western world the phrase is often used to refer to those who deal with impropriety by looking the other way, refusing to acknowledge it, or feigning ignorance.

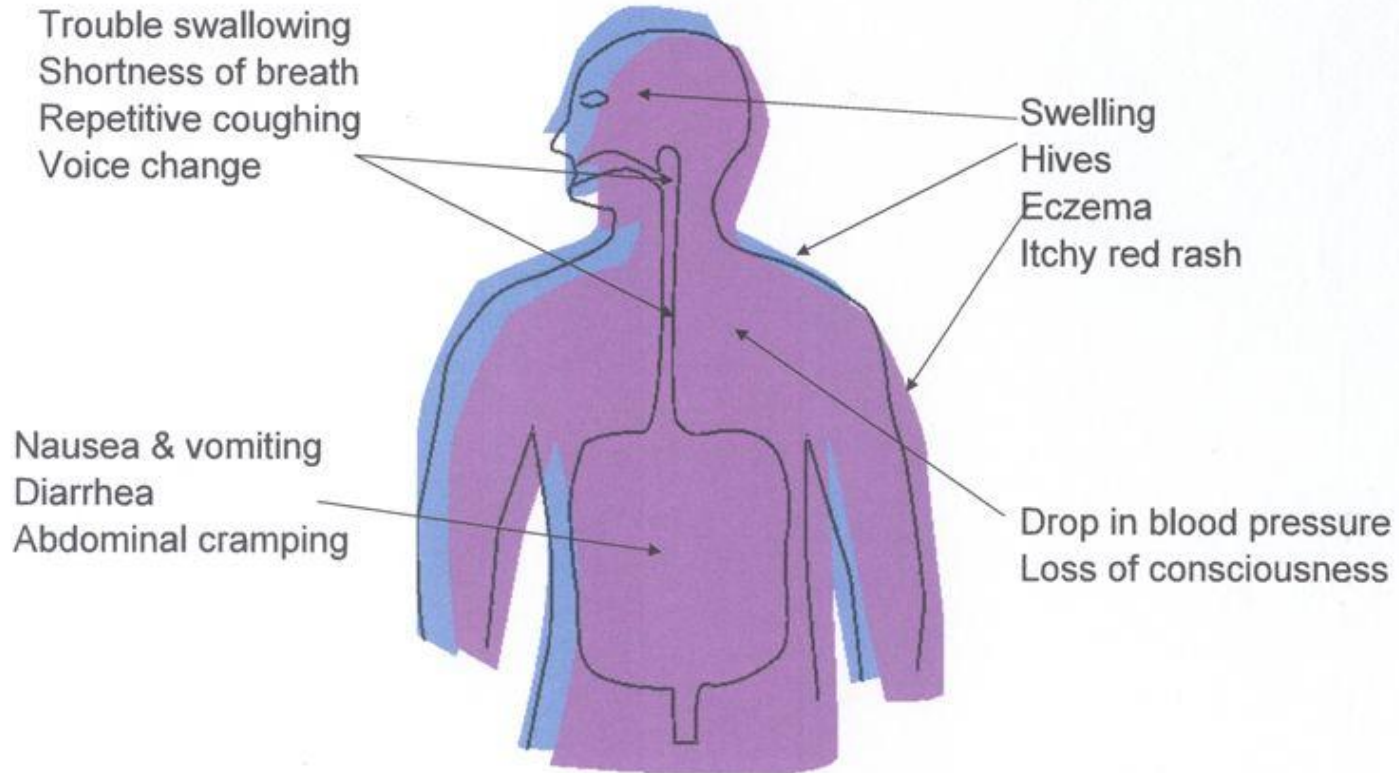
PLEASE take all reactions to food seriously.
This includes Food Allergies, Food Intolerances and Celiac's disease.
These affect both children and adults.
You may save a life!

WHAT ARE FOOD ALLERGIES and OTHER ILLNESSES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD

- A **food allergy** is an immune system response to a food protein. Nearly 12 million or 1 in 25 Americans have a food allergy. Many people may have a life-threatening food allergy and do not know it until they eat a particular food. You can get a food allergy at any age.
- While only eight foods (milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, and soy) are estimated to account for 90% of all food-allergic reactions, a person can be allergic to virtually any food. Corn, seeds, meat and spices are also common allergens. Science has yet to find a cure for true food allergies.
- Depending upon the person, the body's response to a food allergy can range from mild to severe. The most severe reaction, called **Anaphylaxis**, has a very rapid onset - in some cases within seconds - and **can result in death**.
- Mild responses, no less significant than anaphylaxis, can include swelling and itching of the mouth, throat, ears and face, hives, difficulty breathing, coughing, swelling of the mouth and throat, vomiting, cramping and diarrhea.
- Early recognition and treatment of anaphylaxis is imperative and life saving. Once a reaction begins, there is no way to know how severe it will become.



Symptoms – one or more may occur shortly after eating



Each year in the U.S. anaphylaxis due to food causes over 50,000 emergency room visits and 150 deaths.

The Epi Pen

Accidents are never planned. If you are an allergic person, be prepared – medication must be immediately available at all times (women have purses – so where do guys carry their EPI pens?)



Each EpiPen Auto-Injector contains a single dose of a medicine called epinephrine, which you inject into your outer thigh.

Epinephrine should be used with caution if you have heart disease or are taking certain medicines that can cause heart-related (cardiac) symptoms.

Epi pens have their own set of side effects – but it is better to give the epinephrine than not to.

**Side effects may include an increase in heart rate, a stronger or irregular heartbeat, sweating, nausea and vomiting, difficulty breathing, paleness, dizziness, weakness or shakiness, headache, apprehension, nervousness, or anxiety. These side effects usually go away quickly, especially if you rest. If you have high blood pressure or an overactive thyroid, these side effects may be more severe or longer lasting. If you have heart disease, you could experience chest pain (angina). If you have diabetes, your blood sugar levels may increase after use. If you have Parkinson's disease, your symptoms may temporarily get worse.

WHAT ARE FOOD ALLERGIES and OTHER ILLNESSES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD continued

•A **food intolerance** is a metabolic disorder whereby the body lacks a specific enzyme to digest a particular food. A person with a food intolerance will not have a rapid immune response as with a food allergy. Instead, upon eating food they have an intolerance to, a person will experience a slow onset of symptoms ranging from nausea, stomach pain, gas, cramps, bloating or heartburn to vomiting and diarrhea. The real danger lies in the fact that a food intolerance prevents the body from absorbing nutrients - malnutrition is a very real danger. You can get a food intolerance at any age.

•**Celiac disease** (CD) is an autoimmune disorder where the body's immune defenses attack the body's own cells. When gluten is eaten, damage occurs in the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients. This can result in osteoporosis, miscarriages, thyroid disease, malignancies (cancers) and other autoimmune diseases. Gluten is contained in wheat, rye, barley and oats (as well as other wheat like grains). Currently, the only scientifically proven treatment for celiac disease is strict lifelong adherence to a gluten-free (GF) diet. 1 in 133 children and adults in the general population have this genetic based disease. The numbers go up to 1 in 60 people with an autoimmune disease, and 1 in 22 people with first degree relatives. You can get Celiac disease at any age.



Why food allergic people rarely eat out

- With food allergies, food intolerances and Celiac disease, the only way for a person to prevent a negative response is to completely and strictly avoid the item to which they are allergic or intolerant.
- I don't feel listened to.
- I don't trust the wait staff/manager/chef.
- I've read too many stories about people dying because of food allergy reactions.
- I am afraid of cross contamination.
- Research shows that top causes of reactions by food allergic individuals when eating out are staff error, cross-contact - the transfer of a food allergen to food, and insufficient communication between guest and staff.
- Despite the potential to have a severe reaction, people with special diets enjoy eating out just as someone without a food allergy or intolerance. Accommodating guests with a food allergy takes planning, education and a commitment to taking the customer's request seriously. Restaurants serve more than just food. They serve an important role in our lifestyle and socialization. People with food allergies have the same psychological and social needs as those without; but their dietary restrictions can make fulfilling some of these needs difficult.

Issues of cross-contamination continued



Gladys Email: Since Italy has one of the highest rates of Celiac's disease and gluten intolerance - and your restaurant is authentically Italian - I am hoping that you have a gluten free menu? Would love to try your restaurant if it does. Please advise...

Restaurant Email: Hello, Yes we offer gluten free pizza crust in addition to many salads. Thanks

SO.....I called and had a phone conversation with the owner/manager. They could not guarantee the items used on the pizza were Gluten Free and not one of the items had been checked by a dietitian. They said that maybe I should eat some place else.

Gladys Email: We just got done talking on the phone - thank you for your time. I forgot to ask - is the same wooden paddle used to put the Gluten Free pizzas into/out of the oven as is used for the regular crusts??

Restaurant Email: The Gluten free pizza are put in the oven with the same Allumiun paddle wich doesn't absorb any flour. Hope this helps. (signed with an Italian name – and spelling errors not corrected)



Responsibilities of customers

- Find a restaurant that is willing to accommodate your special needs. Research it before eating there.
- Do your homework ahead of time. Call ahead and speak with the chef. Review the menu online with them and have an idea before you arrive about what is safe to eat. Question cross-contamination procedures and ask questions until you are satisfied.
- The KEY to eating out safely and comfortably with food allergies is getting to know the people behind the food...the chefs!
- The best time to ask for special attention from the manager and kitchen is when they are not busy or rushed. Try for an early or late meal. If they are too busy, your requests may be lost in the crowd.
- Simple dishes made from scratch are safest.
- Always alert your server and the manager about your allergies – be vocal ASAP!
- Get an allergy buddy dining card to give to restaurant staff to explain about your needs.
- Double check when the meal arrives. Is this the dish you ordered? Is it safe? When your food arrives, repeat back to the server your special needs and ask nicely if this dish was prepared that way.
- Thank the restaurant and spread the word about your good dining experience.
- Know how to recognize symptoms and administer medications quickly.

Responsibilities of food service professionals

- Don't intentionally set out to harm a customer.
- Use proper hand washing and not antibacterial gel sanitizers.
- Change gloves (non latex) when an allergy ticket comes to the kitchen.
- Vigilant label reading – read every label, every time as formulations can change without warning.
- Ensure food preparation and cleanup is done properly.
- National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) training available on allergen awareness.
- Enforce the 2009 FDA Food Code that states “EMPLOYEES are properly trained in FOOD safety, including food allergy awareness, as it relates to their assigned duties.”
- More than 20% of our meals are now prepared at a restaurant or in a commercial processing facility. The more we rely on others to provide our food, the more we need Environmental Health Practitioners who specialize in food safety.
- Educate yourself and staff about what foods contain “hidden allergens”. Example: the alcohol in vanilla extract is sourced from wheat, dextrose can be sourced from corn, maltodextrin can have many sources – what are they?



Responsibilities of food service professionals continued

Restaurant managers

- Have a written plan to educate your staff – especially the kitchen staff.
- Train all employees over and over, then start over again.
- Have a food allergy management plan. Designate one person on each shift, ideally a manager, to address questions about menu items. Having updated printed information about your menu items ready to hand out to guests makes the guest feel confident of your commitment and allows them to immediately identify dishes they must avoid.
- Come out and meet the customers with special dietary needs to reassure them.

Quality Assurance members

- Prepare with knowledge ahead of time.
- Educate yourself and your teams on a regular basis.

Food Safety and Health Inspectors

- Increase your personal knowledge.
- Make sure food is stored, prepared and cooked correctly so that when it reaches the customer the risk of having problems is reduced.
- Do you really know what is going on behind your back in the facilities you service?

Be an advocate, become informed, share your knowledge whenever you can, refer to scientific sources, take patrons seriously, model your business after food allergy friendly restaurants (Disneyland and World, PF Chang's, Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano, BJ's Restaurant & Brew House).

Websites that will be helpful to you

- www.foodallergy.org Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network - FAAN has created a variety of resources designed for specific audiences such as school professionals, health professionals, and restaurant and food industry professionals. These tools are available to help you in turn teach staff members the essentials behind food allergy management to help keep students, patients, and customers safe from reactions.
- Google 'allergy buddy food cards' and you will get a whole list of free printable cards to take to restaurants. One that is customizable can be found here: <http://archive.supermarketguru.com/page.cfm/7512>
- For a listing of allergy-friendly national restaurant chains, go to www.LivingWithout.com/restaurants.



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For more information about this topic, please visit my site:

www.AllergyFreeHealthyLiving.blogspot.com

I have a special article for you to read on safely dining out with food allergies.



No sock monkeys were harmed in the making of this power point...at least, not intentionally.