

Blogger for Tina's site

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The Top Five Tips on Raising Children with Food Allergies

As a parent of 3 children with food allergies, I am often asked "How do you manage it all?" Here are my Top Five Tips:

Never Let Them See You Cry - Number one and most importantly, **never let them see you cry!** When our oldest daughter was diagnosed with celiac disease, I was relieved to have a diagnosis but overwhelmed with what seemed like the mountain I had to summit to provide her with safe food. This was back before Gluten Free had become a household term, but even today navigating the ins and outs of finding safe food can often feel like a part-time job. Rejoice in the fact that you know what is making your child sick, but then take your private time to grieve. For me, I spent a day locked away in our guest bedroom, mourning what I perceived to be the loss of our "normal" diet and watching a documentary on the evolution of life. At the end of my pity party, I emerged from the guest room determined to make the best of our new diet. I still have moments when I just wish we could go out to eat and order off the menu, but I do not let those moments show. How can I expect my kid not to have a bad attitude about our diet if I do? Luckily, this approach has worked so far. It would be a lie to say that my daughter loves her diet, but she deals with it and does not let it get her down.

Educate, Educate, Educate - Consider yourself enrolled in a Food 101 class to learn about whatever diet restrictions you may have. The internet is an amazing resource of information. Perform a simple [Bing](#) search with your diet restrictions and you will have more than enough information. For a list of resources on the gluten free diet, go to GlutenFreeMom/GettingStartedGlutenFree.com In addition, if you are following other specific diet restrictions check out these websites:

www.allergicchild.com

www.peanutallergy.com

www.autismweb.com

Learn to Read Labels - You may have successfully negotiated life without ever reading a food label, but those days are over. Life will be a little bit easier if your child suffers from one of

the top 8 allergens, as the FDA requires food manufacturers to label containers with these ingredients. Thus, **milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts** (such as almonds, cashews, and walnuts), **fish** (such as bass, cod, flounder), **shellfish** (such as crab, lobster, shrimp), **soy**, and **wheat** will be labeled. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as it may sound. For instance, the parent of a child with a dairy allergy also needs to avoid foods that contain *butter, butter fat, butter oil, butter acid, butter ester(s), buttermilk, casein, casein hydrolysate, caseinates, all cheese, cottage cheese, cream, curds, custard, diacetyl ghee, half-and-half, lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate, lactoferrin, lactose lactulose, milk (including condensed, derivative, dry, evaporated, goat's milk and milk from other animals, low-fat, malted, milkfat, nonfat, powder, protein, skimmed, solids, whole), milk protein, hydrolysate pudding, Recaldent®, rennet, casein, sour cream, sour cream solids, sour milk solids tagatose, whey, whey protein, hydrolysate, yogurt*. You get the picture - and the important point is **Educating Yourself!** For safe eating, our motto is *When in Doubt, Go Without*. For more on understanding food labels go to [food allergy.org](http://foodallergy.org).

Go Healthy – When first tackling food allergies, you can choose one of two paths – you can spend a lot of time reading labels and searching the web for “safe” allergy friendly food, or you can spend that same time cooking wholesome food for your family that you know is safe. You will have to find the approach that works for your family, but for us *simpler is better*. Thus, if something has more than five ingredients and is not clearly labeled, I will not buy it. I would rather go without than spend all the time it is going to take to find out if it is gluten free. I have also found that in most instances it is quicker and easier to make it myself and find reassurance in knowing what all of the ingredients are and where they came from. So instead of searching for a box of processed crackers that are free from all of your allergens, feed your kids an apple smeared with peanut butter (if they can have that) or a slice of cheese. You will all be better off in the end.

Do Not Stop Living – Some people live to eat - we have learned *to eat so we can live*. Eating out, traveling, school, birthday parties, etc., will be little mountains that you will have to summit over and over again. For us, we would rather go and have to deal with the challenges presented by our special diets than to not go at all.

Bold statements to be sure, having lived with kids with multiple allergies for five years, but I have to admit we did not eat out for the first six months on the gluten free diet. I just wasn't prepared enough to handle that yet. The first time we did go out, it was a disaster! We went to a chain restaurant, during the busy lunch hour, at a very busy mall. We were not sure what we

were doing and our waiter was even worse. When the food finally did arrive – the burger was on a bun. We sent it back. Of course, while we were waiting for the new burger the other kids (who were starving by this time) gobbled all of their lunch and they were more than ready to go by the time the Gluten Free Kid’s burger arrived – then, in tears, she refused to eat the burger. Just a hunk of hamburger meat was not too appealing to her. So we went home and cooked lunch.

It was months before we went out again. This time we were armed with information, called before we went to confirm they could prepare a GF meal, picked a gluten friendly restaurant, and went before the dinner rush. Most importantly we had a great time – they were so nice they even gave us complimentary desserts. No – we do not eat out as much as we used to. But we have had many terrific gluten free dining out experiences since then and have had friends also successfully prepare us meals in their homes.

Because living with diet restrictions will not stop you from living the life you choose!

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Jamie is a forty-something gluten free mom, cook and blogger currently residing in the beautiful Pacific Northwest with her husband and three children. She is just a Mom who is raising her family and living gluten free. She graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Political Science and then from the College of Law, Order of the Coif. After law school, she moved to Chicago where she married her husband of 15 plus years and practiced law for five years. We then spent two short years in Kansas City where our first daughter was born. It was not long until Microsoft came knocking on our door, and so the move to Woodinville, WA which is on the Eastside of Seattle. Our second daughter was born in Seattle, and then we adopted our son from Guatemala.

Their oldest daughter was diagnosed with celiac disease in 2005. After being on a gluten free diet for a week herself, she suddenly felt better than she had her entire life. Subsequent test showed that she carries the gene for celiac disease. Jamie considers herself extremely lucky to be able to stay at home and raise her kids. They are her God's greatest blessings. When she am not strolling the aisles of Whole Foods looking for the latest and greatest gluten free item, she enjoy oil painting, running, boating with my family, skiing, reading and hiking.

**Tina Turbin, Founder of <http://GlutenFreeHelp.info>
Your Dependable Celiac and Gluten-Free Resource Guide**

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