

Tolerance

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"I can understand the situation this family has experienced regarding their health and issues with food sensitivities," she said. "It is possible for a person to become extremely ill and lose a lot of weight if a person is experiencing food intolerances or food allergies."

Founder of Artemis in the City, Heard said with dietary changes, these people are able to regain their health. She has made a job — and a personal mission — of it. Heard said she experienced it for herself, lived with the body aches and general malaise, and found traditional medicine lacking.

Sara Pierle (pronounced pearl lee), a registered dietitian at Good Shepherd Medical Center, said many people confuse food sensitivities to food allergies.

"A true food allergy causes an immune system reaction that affects numerous organs in the body. It can cause a range of symptoms. In some cases, an allergic food reaction can be severe or life-

threatening, such as anaphylactic shock.

"Food intolerance symptoms are generally less serious and usually affects the digestive system, such as bloating, gas, cramps, diarrhea. Food sensitivities less often can cause headache, nervousness, shakiness," Pierle said.

Food sensitivities, which is interchangeable with food intolerances, are fairly common, whereas food allergies are less common, she said. A person may become sensitive to or allergic to food substances as they grow older, or might grow out of the allergy or sensitivity.

A person with a food allergy must never ingest that food, she said, but sometimes sensitivities are difference.

"People with sensitivities often have a threshold," she said. "That is, a person who is lactose intolerant might not be able to have milk with every meal, or even every day, but might be able to tolerate milk or a dairy product every other day," Pierle said.

Unfortunately for the Purdums, Rami isn't one of those.

"I know that if I eat even a little bit of anything to which I'm intolerant, I'm going to be sick," he said.

Because of food intolerances, the family doesn't go out to eat and doesn't accept invitations to dinner.

"It's very ostracizing," Anna Purdum, who has discovered her own wheat sensitivity, "because you don't realize how many social functions — church, work, family, friends — are built around food, one way or another, either at a home or restaurant."

Even more isolating is the skepticism.

With the emotion of a woman who has been hurt by the careless words of others, Anna Purdum expressed her feelings. "There are people who just, flat out, don't believe you. They can't — they won't — see the connection between some food and a sinus infection or wheat and bronchitis. They don't experience it, and maybe no one in their family does, so we must be

making it up."

The medical field is coming around, both Heard and Pierle agree. Some of the things once considered to be "all in your head" is now known to be a problem in your diet.

The medical community is catching on, the general public generally has not.

"If there is one thing I want to do (with this newspaper article), it is to tell people to be supportive of anyone they know who is experimenting with their diet in an attempt to improve their well-being," Anna Purdum said. "If you can't bring yourself to be encouraging, at least don't be discouraging. It's very hurtful. It's very demoralizing and you don't know the damage you might be causing."

In gluten-free baking, success tends to be procedure-oriented, Anna Purdum said. "If you are using a recipe, adhere to the author's instructions carefully because the order in which you do things is even more important in gluten-free baking than baking with

wheat products.

"If you cook intuitively, the batter you use will not often have consistencies similar to what you are used to. If you are following instructions for cake batter, and it comes out looking like cookie dough, don't second guess yourself, just press it into the pan and bake it.

"Don't give up. It gets easier with practice."

Cookbooks she recommends include "The Gluten Free Gourmet" and "Special Diets for Special Kids."

Old Fashioned Cherry Pie

Pie Crust:

1 cup corn flour
1 cup corn starch
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup oil

Pie Filling:

3 (15-ounce) cans pitted red tart cherries in water, drained
1 1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup corn starch
Dash of salt

In a separate bowl, stir water and oil together vigorously un-

til mixed. Quickly, before it separates, pour into the dry mixture of flour, starch and salt. Stir all ingredients until dough is stiff and sticky. Knead dough until smooth.

For a bottom crust: Press the crust into pie plate. Set the pie plate aside and let the crust dry for about an hour.

For a top crust: In the meantime, make a ball of dough about the size of a baseball. Roll between 2 pieces of wax paper. Flatten. Leave your flat top crust between the wax paper until you are ready to cover the pie.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Pour pie filling into bottom crust. Peel wax paper off top crust. Carefully flip the top crust onto the pie. Cut or tear off extra crust overhanging the pie plate. Pinch to seal edges. Cut slits in top crust for steam to vent while baking.

"Gluten-free dough is not very elastic, and it breaks easily," Purdum said.

"This is the reason I recommend pressing bottom crust into pie plate by hand rather than rolling it out and laying it in."