

*a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative*

# Free-From MAGAZINE

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Super fun recipes  
to indulge in

**A LETTER  
TO THE FOOD  
INDUSTRY**

From the Seven Percent  
Coalition



**THE ZESTY  
CORNER**

How to recognize  
anxiety and steps to  
take to get help

**MEET  
THE BRODYS**

Building a celiac  
support community

**THE  
TASTEMAKERS**

Taking "Gluten-Free"  
to the next level



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Our May issue is dedicated to a serious topic: Food Allergy & Celiac Disease Awareness. You could say this is Food Equality Initiative's gluten-free bread and butter. The whole reason our organization exists is to serve and advocate for the food allergy and celiac disease communities. Our mission, as stated on our website, is:

**To improve health and end hunger in individuals diagnosed with food allergies and celiac disease through access to safe and healthy food, nutrition education, and advocacy**

Take a second to look deeper at our logo and you'll see that advocacy is deeply ingrained in our organization.



The apple represents food; that is easy to see, right? But look at the colors, teal and green. Teal represents food allergy awareness. Green is for celiac disease. And then there is the ribbon that ties them together in awareness and equality. The communities affected by diet-related illnesses, whether it be food allergies, celiac disease, EoE, intolerances, or more, are intricately intertwined.

At Food Equality Initiative, we are taking the initiative to serve, educate and advocate on a greater scale. Though we have changed our methods of serving (from food pantries to direct-to-door delivery) our intention has never wavered. We know, only too well, the struggles of living with or caring for someone with food allergies/ceciac disease and the strain it puts not only on your budget, but your mental health.

That is why in this issue we want to dedicate time to acknowledge the amount of effort and love each of you put into the food allergic/ceciac disease community. Thank you for

being vulnerable in telling us what you need and how we can serve you better. Thank you for letting your guard down and sharing your personal stories with us and all the readers of the Free-From Magazine. And thank you for being strong in supporting and fostering a sense of community amongst food allergic and celiac individuals.

**Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Soy, Wheat, Fish, Shellfish, Sesame, Dairy, Eggs**

It is a bit ironic that these nine items bring us all together in the fact that we cannot partake. Some of us cannot eat 9, some of us cannot eat 2, some of us cannot eat 30+. But all of us are affected, and all of us need support. We hope you enjoy this month's issue, that it empowers you to speak up for what you need and find community when you need it most.

Take Care,  
Sofia Gillespie  
Editor in Chief,  
Free-From Magazine



@FOODEQUALITY  
#FFMARKETPLACE

# Free-From MAGAZINE

a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

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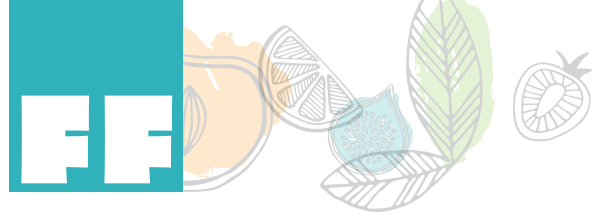
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# SEVEN PERCENT FUND™

A Food Equality Initiative Coalition

The Seven Percent Fund & Coalition was founded in June of 2020, after Emily Brown, founder of Food Equality Initiative, wrote an open letter to the food allergy community following George Floyd's murder. This letter spurred the food allergy community into action to discuss the racial and economic disparities in healthcare and food allergy and to raise money to enact actual change. This month, May, is Food Allergy and Celiac Disease Awareness Month, and we thought it was important to share with you the statement the Coalition has made to advocate for the food allergy community.

## Dear industry colleague,

**W**e are writing because we are both in the business of delivering quality foods for people to enjoy. We believe that everyone should have access to safe foods. This year with the added impact of Covid-19 the USDA estimates 18 million children could face hunger, which has increased from the previous year's projection of 11 million. Food Equality Initiative (FEI) was founded to combat food insecurity specifically as it pertains to those needing access to allergy-friendly foods. As an allergy-friendly brand, we know FEI's work is vital which is why we are excited to partner with them. The following letter details what we have learned about food insecurity and food inequality. We hope that as an industry partner you'll join us in this effort after learning more!

### The problem inside the problem

Our industry is well aware of the food insecurity in our country. But there is a hidden issue inside the hunger problem. There are 60,000 food pantries in the

United States, but only a handful stock safe foods for people with food allergies, celiac disease and other digestive disorders. When you consider that 32 million Americans, including about six million children, must avoid certain foods to maintain their health, and that most food assistance programs don't provide sufficient access to allergy-friendly foods for this vulnerable population, the health risks for low-income members of this group become clear.

According to [Food Equality Initiative \(FEI\)](#), even under normal conditions, the cost and availability of allergen and gluten-free foods is challenging for many. But under the current COVID-19 conditions, food supply chains have been interrupted, more people than expected have lost their income, and food insecurity has increased significantly. For those in this group who rely on medically required allergy-free foods, the problem has gone from bad to worse.

Moreover, are you aware that [Black children are 7% more likely to have a food allergy than white children](#), are diagnosed less often, receive less medical care, and are more likely to suffer serious life-threatening events? When combined with existing chronic racial disparities in income and access to healthcare, the health risks for low-income Black persons with food allergies or illness are amplified.

In 2020, fourteen companies became founding members of FEI's new [Seven Percent Coalition](#), a group comprised of allergy-friendly food manufacturers, health experts and community stakeholders seeking to end systemic health disparities related to food allergy. We have pledged financial support and are stepping up to communicate with our local communities and networks.

### Why you?

The mission of FEI, a recognized nonprofit public benefit corporation based in Kansas City, MO, is to improve health and end hunger in individuals diagnosed with food allergies and celiac disease through access to safe and healthy food, nutrition education, and advocacy. Since your company helps to feed America, and food allergy/illness impacts about 10% of our citizens, FEI is asking for your help to extend its reach.

There are several ways you can participate in this mission:

- You can join us in the Seven Percent Coalition
- You can [contact FEI](#) to learn more and can work with your network and community to help improve access to safe foods by those who need them
- You can share this information with your own professional and personal networks to raise awareness

**“Our voices, our families, and our health can no longer be ignored.”**

**-- EMILY BROWN, CEO & FOUNDER OF FEI**

Please join us in the Seven Percent movement.  
Sincerely,



## BRAND SPOTLIGHT

### Enjoy Life Foods

Sofia Gillespie

## Enjoy Life Foods creates snacks to satisfy everyone's taste buds.

Some popular items include Breakfast Ovals, made with whole grains, which come in tasty varieties such as Apple Cinnamon and Chocolate Chip Banana. Both flavors are available to order online from the Free-From Marketplace and on the website at [enjoylifefoods.com](http://enjoylifefoods.com).

Enjoy Life Foods was established in 2001 with the goal to bring joy back into food for people with limited diets, whether this be “dietary restrictions” or “food allergies”. After a family member of founder Bert Cohen was diagnosed with MS and had to follow a gluten-free and dairy-free diet, Bert and co-founder Scott Mandell decided that the free-from snack options available on the market were not up to par. So, they took matters into their own hands



and created Enjoy Life Foods. Their mission is simple: to produce great-tasting snacks free-from the 8 most common allergens. Today they do one better (or actually six better).

“All Enjoy Life Foods products are certified gluten-free and free-from 14 allergens – wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, casein, soy, egg, sesame, sulfites, lupin, mustard, fish, shellfish and crustaceans.



In addition, most of Enjoy Life Foods products are made in their very own allergy-friendly facility, built from the ground up to meet these high standards.

The Gluten Free Certification Organization (GFCO) certification is twice as stringent as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements for foods that are labeled gluten free. All Enjoy Life Foods products contain 10 parts per million of gluten or less. Our facilities and ingredient suppliers adhere to strict quality standards. In addition, the company practices verified allergen cleaning routines and we regularly test our foods for specific allergens, so you can enjoy our snacks with peace of mind.”

Since its founding, more than 85 free-from products have hit the shelves in over 40,000 locations across the United States. And in 2017, Enjoy Life Foods expanded its allergy-friendly foods to markets abroad in Australia and China!

More than just making their tasty snacks, Enjoy Life Foods supports and celebrates the Food Allergy and Gluten Free community. In 2017, Enjoy Life Foods turned teal, updating their packaging colors to stand in unison with the food allergy community. (Teal is the color of food allergy awareness.) And in 2020, Enjoy Life became one of the Founders of Food Equality Initiative's Seven Percent Fund & Coalition, dedicated to advocating for food allergic individuals.

**For May, the month of Food Allergy and Celiac Disease Awareness, you can feel reassured that Enjoy Life Foods has your back (and your tastebuds).**

For more information, visit their website

[enjoylifefoods.com](http://enjoylifefoods.com)

Check out the recipe section of the magazine to find neat ways to use their products in the kitchen.



# THE TASTEMAKERS

This is a recurring section of Free-From Magazine that is led by teenagers who are active change-makers in the food allergy community.



## Taking "Gluten Free" to the next level

Aanya Gupta

### Besides my family, the two things I love the most are food and basketball.

I am a huge foodie and love everything to do with food! I'm at my happiest when I'm trying new foods and new restaurants! Basketball is also a really big part of my life; I love every part of the sport. It's hard to imagine a time in my life without food and basketball, but there was a point in my life when I thought I had lost both.

### Here's The Story

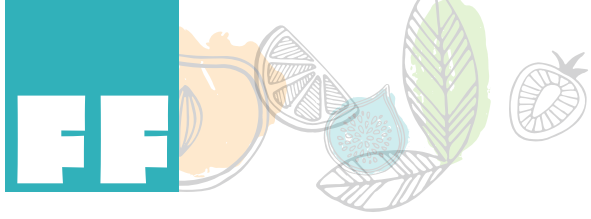
In December 2018, I started choking on solid foods and had severe stomach aches, symptoms that would continue to persist for many months to come. By March 2019, the issues with swallowing solid food became so

bad that I was on an almost entirely liquid diet, drinking only soup, water, and smoothies. The only solid food I ate was whole-wheat bread. Oh how, I would regret that choice!

In a matter of months, I had lost almost 15 pounds and my doctor made the decision that in order to prevent any more weight loss, I was to halt all physical activity-including basketball.

After a long period of cluelessness, an endoscopy finally revealed damaged villi (fingerlike structures in the small intestine), which was a clear sign of celiac disease. Bloodwork confirmed this observation and in May 2019, I started my gluten-free journey.

No one else in my family had celiac disease, so the diagnosis was both scary and confusing at first. I was not expecting such a big lifestyle change and I wasn't prepared. Being a huge foodie, to suddenly have a long list of foods that I was no longer able to safely eat, broke my heart.



My mother saw how upset I was about my limited food options and gave me the idea of cooking the foods I craved at home. With her help, I was able to create dozens of delicious new recipes, replicating those I was no longer able to eat.

I found so much success in this that my friends, who aren't gluten free, found some of my creations and gluten-free products better than the ones with gluten!

Once a friend commented after trying a piece of my gluten-free pizza, "This doesn't taste gluten free, it's so good!" This is a commonly held misconception; so many people think that gluten-free foods can't taste good and that gluten-free diets are very restrictive! But that's far from the truth!

By August 2019, I completely recovered from the pre-diagnosis events, the gluten-free diet truly does work magic for celiacs! Soon, I was healthy enough to return back to basketball, the sport I love.

### But I didn't stop there...

My experiences with cooking and celiac inspired me to create the Instagram account, @living\_the\_gf\_vibes\_, to share my recipes and favorite safe products with others in the community. My continued goal for this account is to be able to spread positivity, relatability, and share new recipes with those with dietary restrictions!

On this account, I share all types of recipes ranging from lunch/dinner ideas to snack ideas and even desserts! However, I also try to use my account to raise food allergy and celiac awareness.

I held my first food allergy awareness campaign last summer when I hosted a virtual 5K to raise money for End Allergies Together (EAT), a nonprofit food allergy charity that helped fund leading researchers to find cures and treatments for allergies. (EAT has since disbanded, but you can still access their website for resources.) [endallergiestogether.com](http://endallergiestogether.com)

My campaign started in June when I reached out to End Allergies Together and joined their teen ambassador program. The manager of the teen ambassador program told me about how EAT helped fund leading research for food allergy cures and how as an ambassador I had the ability to host a fundraiser with their help.

Loving basketball and staying active as a whole, I came up with the idea of doing a virtual run. With EAT's help, we set up an official hashtag and made a website to receive donations and share run experiences! I gained leadership skills by reaching out to friends and family to ask if they'd like to participate, giving flyers out to neighbors, and holding Instagram Lives spreading the news about the run. EAT also helped spread the news to the food allergy community.

The run ended up being a huge success! Globally, participants of all ages- young children, teenagers, adults, grandparents, all joined in to run for a great cause! With so many generous contributions, we were able to raise \$1,200 for food allergy research!



## many people think that gluten-free foods can't taste good and that gluten-free diets are very restrictive! But that's far from the truth!

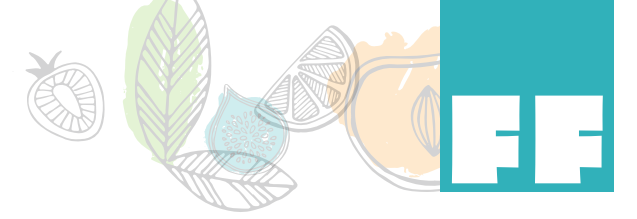
I love sharing this story because this experience helped me grow as a person and food allergy/celiac advocate. Through the run, I was able to digitally connect with so many people like me and learn about their experiences with celiac and food allergies as well! I found a feeling of relatability and comfort in talking with these people, and I hope that others felt the same way when speaking with me. Most importantly, the run helped me for the first time see the positives in my diagnoses.

### The positives of celiac and food allergies

Seeing the positive in my food allergies and celiac was a very hard thing for me to do. At first, I only saw what I felt I was missing out on, but there are so many good things that I had been overlooking! Firstly, food allergy/celiac experiences have helped me become a healthier person as a whole! Reading labels for allergens has led me to be more aware of what exactly I'm eating and has helped me find an appreciation for minimally processed meals. I also credit these experiences in helping me make the decision to learn cooking, a valuable life skill as well! But that's not all! My diagnosis has helped me connect with a whole community of people and friends who have similar experiences as me and will always be there to support me!

### Get Involved

For this reason, to all those who have recently been diagnosed with celiac disease or food allergies, I strongly recommend getting involved! There are so



many different ways you can connect with people just like you! I found success in making connections through social media and would definitely recommend doing that if it is something that interests you. You can also reach out to nonprofits who have ambassador programs (like the Teen Advisory Board at FEI) and share your experiences either by word of mouth or creating a food allergy/celiac website. The different ways to connect your talents and hobbies with food allergies are endless!

Email FEI to find out about the Teen Advisory Board: [contact@foodequalityinitiative.org](mailto:contact@foodequalityinitiative.org)

I hope that through sharing my experiences, you are inspired to live your life to the fullest and not let your allergies stop you from doing the things you love!

When life gives you lemons, bake a gluten-free lemon cake!

To see new recipes and follow Aanya's journey, visit her Instagram page @living\_the\_gf\_vibes\_ and website at Living the GF Vibes.



### ABOUT AANYA

Hi! My name is Aanya. I am a 14-year-old from the suburbs of Chicago. I am a food blogger, 'End Allergies Together' Ambassador, and an Alan App ambassador.



## GLUTEN-FREE VEGAN MACADAMIA NUT BROWNIE

by Aanya Gupta



You ever wake up craving brownies? Well, that's exactly what happened when I created this recipe! I was having a very hard time trying to find a recipe that fit all my dietary restrictions, so I created this one! This brownie was moist, rich, and absolutely delicious!

### INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cup of Sorghum flour  
 1/2 cup of Gluten-Free Flour (All purpose, classic blend, etc.)  
 1 cup of Anthony's cocoa powder or other allergen-free cocoa powder  
 1 1/2 cup of sugar  
 1 1/2 tsp of baking powder  
 pinch of salt  
 Vegan Buttermilk: Mixture of 1 lime and 1 cup of soy milk (Rice milk, Coconut milk, or other dairy alternatives would work well too!) curdled for 10 minutes (butter-milk idea credits to Loving it Vegan)  
 3/4 cup of Avocado oil

1 1/2 tsp of Vanilla extract  
 1/2 cup of Enjoy Life Chocolate Chips  
 Unsalted macadamia nuts, crushed



### DIRECTIONS

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and line your choice of baking tray with parchment paper

Mix together both types of flours, cocoa powder, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl

Add in the buttermilk and vanilla extract. Slowly add in the oil as well

Stir in your Enjoy Life chocolate chips and some of your crushed macadamia nuts

Cover the batter and let it sit for 30 minutes  
 Spread your batter onto your baking tray evenly

Sprinkle some more macadamia nuts on top

Bake until done (took my brownies 40-45 minutes)

Take out and cool for 20 minutes

Enjoy



# DE-STRESSING ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG FOLKS!

Sometimes we have good days and sometimes we have bad days, and that is okay. You do not have to be happy all the time. It is okay to feel however you feel; sad, mad, excited, nervous, scared. Only you know how you feel, and it is up to you to communicate that to others. You can use words or you can use actions, or maybe even a combination of both. Letting others know how you feel can make you feel better, especially if you are feeling down. If others know how you feel, then they are better suited to help you with listening, talking through things,

solving the problem, or simply feeling sad with you. But before that, sometimes it helps to just be alone for a little while. That alone time helps us figure out what is going on in our heads, so that way we can tell others just how we are feeling.

Here are some activities you can do during that alone time to help you focus your mind and body on other things and recenter your emotions. We all need a break every once in a while. So take a deep breath and try to have some fun!

## Word Search: Emotions

We have hidden 21 words that you can use to describe how you are feeling. These are just a few options, but you can experience almost infinite emotions! That is the beauty of being a human. If you don't know some of these words, don't be afraid to ask a grown-up or look them up in the dictionary. Happy word hunting!

C	E	U	G	N	L	T	D	E	R	U	S	N	U
O	S	B	E	E	O	H	I	E	C	N	N	E	J
N	E	R	R	N	N	A	S	D	O	X	Y	D	O
F	D	A	E	D	E	N	G	D	M	D	T	E	Y
I	E	V	J	D	L	K	U	E	F	E	L	T	F
D	Z	E	E	E	Y	F	S	S	O	S	I	I	U
E	I	X	C	D	G	U	T	A	R	S	U	C	L
N	G	H	T	N	C	L	E	E	T	E	G	X	D
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X	E	U	D	F	N	O	T	P	B	P	Z	T	V
Y	N	S	S	F	T	R	E	I	L	E	R	T	O
A	E	T	C	O	E	E	D	L	E	D	G	E	L
F	U	E	E	E	N	D	E	Y	O	N	N	A	N
D	E	D	B	E	T	R	A	Y	E	D	R	T	A

- DEPRESSED
- REJECTED
- COMFORTABLE
- LONELY
- JOYFUL
- EXCITED
- BETRAYED
- ENERGIZED
- CONFIDENT
- ANNOYED
- GUILTY
- EXHAUSTED
- PLEASED
- THANKFUL
- DISGUSTED
- OFFENDED
- UNSURE
- LOVED
- BORED
- CONTENT
- BRAVE

## Word Search: Emotions

Use whatever colors feel right to fill in this drawing. We recommend using gel-pens or permanent markers on the slick page to prevent the colors from sliding around and getting stuck on your hands. (Use anything that is not water-based.) Stay inside the lines or draw wild, we don't care! Have fun!



ETSY.COM/SHOP/AMELIASARTCORNER

@AMELIASARTCORNER



## How to Explain Celiac Disease in a Gluten-Free World

Alena Frankish

Smart Bite Solutions

**You've probably heard that, for various reasons, many people around the world are going gluten-free.**

On one hand, this increased popularity seems to bring some clear benefits, as more gluten-free foods are available now than ever before. On the other hand, it's difficult to explain that for people with celiac disease, a gluten-free diet is a medical necessity and not a personal choice.

In today's article, we will answer four frequently asked questions, to help

you spread awareness and empower you in explaining celiac disease to others.

### What is celiac disease and how do you get it?

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder. This means your own immune system, which normally protects you from getting sick, mistakenly starts attacking your own body cells. When people with celiac disease eat even a tiny particle of gluten, their immune system starts destroying the lining of the intestine, making them sick.

This is why a test called "intestinal biopsy" remains the most accurate method of diagnosing celiac disease. During this procedure a doctor can see and confirm if there is inflammation and/or damage to your intestine.

Although we know a lot about celiac disease, much is still to be discovered. For example, scientists are still unsure on what causes celiac disease. Interactions between our genes and our foods with various environmental factors may play a role here.

### What is gluten and is it bad for you?

Many people are confused about gluten. Some say it is just another word for grain. Others say it is a carbohydrate that makes you gain weight. Still others claim that gluten is an ingredient that makes everyone sick. None of these are true.

Gluten is a protein. It is found in grains such as wheat, barley, and rye, and it helps dough to be stretchy and strong. Importantly, there is no evidence that going gluten-free will improve your health, prevent any

disease, or "detoxify" your gut if you don't have celiac disease. It is not dangerous, nor it is unhealthy by itself. It just happens to be a substance that triggers inflammation in people. As such, following a gluten-free diet should be a decision made by you and your doctor.

### If someone in your family has celiac disease, do all family members need to go gluten-free?

Although it may be ideal, oftentimes it's not possible for the whole family to go gluten-free if only one family member has celiac disease. However, if you do this, you need to have a good, detailed plan about how to avoid cross-contamination between regular and gluten-free dishes. Think about how your kitchen is organized, and make sure that even tiny gluten particles from other foods, pots, utensils, toaster, etc. will not get into the food of the person with celiac disease.

For example, keep foods that contain gluten separate, and use bright markers to mark gluten-free foods / snacks, especially if packaging is similar. Kitchen items that have touched gluten-containing foods need to be washed thoroughly with dish soap and hot water (and ideally run through a dishwasher afterwards). And of course, don't forget to use a separate sponge! If you can have a separate set (just for the person with celiac disease to use) that also could help to make things a bit easier for you! It is also best to serve the person with celiac disease first (while all utensils are still clean). Then serve everyone else

to avoid accidental transfer of gluten to their plate.

Although recently there has been a lot of effort to increase celiac disease awareness, it is important to be your own advocate. There is a lot of misinformation and rumors about gluten-free diet and celiac disease, so each of us can take part in raising awareness by educating our friends and family members about it! Keep safe, and til next!



### ABOUT ALENA

Alena is the founder of Smart Bite Solutions, a nutrition support network for people with food allergies and celiac disease. She is a nutrition writer and food photographer who resides in Alberta, Canada. Alena earned degrees in Psychology, Food Science and Human Nutrition and is finishing her internship to become a Registered Dietitian.



## THE ZESTY CORNER

### How to recognize anxiety and steps to take to get help

Kortney Kwong Hing & Shahla Rashid

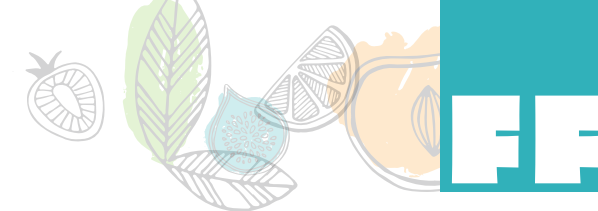
Listen to The Itch for more information about food allergies!



#### What is healthy anxiety?

This article is a summary of part of [The Itch Podcast](#) interview with [Lisa Rosenberg \(Lisa Rosenberg, Safe & Included LLC\)](#) on food allergy anxiety.

**W**e all need to have some level of anxiety because it's a survival mechanism. Mild anxiety related to food allergy can be a protective defense. For instance, anxiety often leads to the allergic person being more cautious, which is what you want, especially when it comes to



your kids being alone at school having to manage their allergies. But, anxiety can become debilitating, which is when it leads to harm. You need to find a balance between “helping” anxiety and “debilitating” (harmful) anxiety.



#### How do you know if it is debilitating anxiety?

##### If it is affecting the day-to-day functioning, it's a problem.

When it's stopping us from doing things that we really want to do like going to a friend's house, going on vacation or being able to eat out at a restaurant, it shows that the scales are too far tipped towards “debilitating” anxiety.

We all have “anxiety antennas.” These antennas give us the feeling of something being “safe” or “unsafe”. When danger is near, they go up; and when it passes, our antennas should go back down. However, sometimes they get “stuck” in the “up” position, and this is when it becomes a problem. Your “stuck” antennae may start to impede (negatively affect) your ability to enjoy life.

#### What anxiety could look like?

##### A. Feeling very angry

**“Anger is definitely one of the dues that people don't often due into.”**

**- Lisa Rosenberg**

Signs of anxiety that people don't often associate with anxiety is anger.

Think back to a situation where you felt angry, such as when your child was invited to a birthday party or you were invited out to dinner. The thought of “ why are they having it here?” may cause frustration rather than spark joy around celebrating a special occasion.

That anger often comes from a place of anxiety, and being unable to recognize why you may not want to attend this event.

Anger as a sign of anxiety can occur at any age and doesn't just have to be as an adult. For example, it is common to see kids get angry

with themselves. Kids may be angry about why they have a food allergy in the first place. That anger manifests into frustration, and often kids internalize their feelings, thinking that “something is wrong” with them. On the other hand, adults often externalize anger and become angry with others because they “don't get it” when it comes to what it is truly like to live with a food allergy.

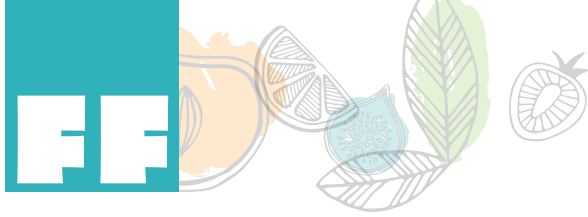
Being angry with ourselves or others is not helpful. Anger often makes us unhappy so we choose to avoid situations that cause us to feel those uncomfortable feelings, which in turn, lead us to feeling more isolated.

So what can we do about it? It often helps to focus on the circumstances and stick to facts. Remove emotions as best as possible.

First, identify what you need from others to be able to enjoy the experience. What do you need others to do to help decrease your anxiety and create a safer space?

- Ask everyone to wash hands
- Speak to a chef first
- Look at ingredients





## B. Not wanting to do anything

### Avoidance is a behavior that comes out of anxiety.

Our thoughts control our behaviors. Sometimes when we are worried, our worry shows up in our body as well. It might “show up” as a headache or stomach ache, lethargy, being inactive or always tired. An anxious person often does not want to do anything. They often want to stay home and watch TV to avoid the uncomfortable feelings (both physical and emotional) that anxiety can cause.

Anxiety can feel like being on a gerbil wheel. Your mind is constantly going, spinning, and it doesn't stop; it's exhausting.

Coping strategies such as deep breathing, mindfulness, and exercise can help you get off the spinning wheel.

### Why work with a professional?

A professional can help you identify your level of anxiety in different environments. They will work with you on figuring out how to identify these levels of thinking and to go through the preventative steps to take, such as before an event that you know is anxiety-provoking. This way, you can be proactive with how

to approach it. In short, you develop a toolbox of coping skills and learn to pick the “right tool” for each situation. Different skills will work at different times and sometimes we figure it out by “trial and error”.

A professional behavioral health clinician can help you learn which tools work for you, and eventually, you will be able to decrease your anxiety on your own so that you can be present and enjoy yourself while still being safe.

Whether this is for you or your child, it's really about prioritizing yourself, even if that means reconfiguring your budget to be able to “find” money for a short period of time to work with a professional. Counseling is not typically a forever strategy. The goal is be able to learn coping skills, and then be able to apply it without your therapist over time.

### How to find help

Look for a local therapist or **one that specializes in working with food allergy patients.** (Check out [foodallergycounselor.com](http://foodallergycounselor.com)). When making first contact, it is common to worry about the cost of therapy. Many therapists accept insurance plans. If you are not covered or cannot afford to work with a professional, call a therapist to ask if they have a sliding fee scale or if they offer pro bono hours. Many people are afraid to ask, but clinicians want to help people.

Other ways to find support are to use your community resources, such as a house of worship, that provide counseling services. Also, your local university's graduate psychology or social work programs may have graduate students working in clinics who might be able to provide Behavioral Health Services at reduced cost.

If you're a college student (and even for some alumni), typically campus services are free.

- **[www.talkspace.com](http://www.talkspace.com):** Online therapy with a licensed therapist
- **[www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org):** A list of low cost or sliding scale medical clinics in your area; also great for finding low cost medication alternatives.
- **Text START to 741741:** Text with a licensed behavioral health professional – for behavioral health crisis
- **1800- 273-TALK:** Talk with a licensed behavioral health professional – for behavioral health crisis



## FEI FAMILY MEMBERS: THE BRODYS

### Building a Celiac Support Community

Sarah Guthrie

### Spontaneity goes out the window, says Paula Brody

**W**hen you have a diagnosis of celiac disease. You can't ever “just go” out to eat or book a “last minute” vacation – you always have to have a Plan B for food.

For more than four years Paula has been creating “Plan B's” for her 14-year-old son, Max.

“Max got sick in January 2016, when he was in third grade,” she recalls. “At first it was a strep diagnosis with severe stomach pain. The doctor thought he also might have acid reflux. He was miserable. Antibiotics and reflux medicine did not help.”

Finally, the doctor said he wanted to do blood work because they did not know what was wrong with Max.

“It wasn't until the first day of spring break when he called to tell me that Max had celiac disease,” said Paula, who is an administrative assistant in the Fine

Arts Department at Liberty Public Schools. “And I remember thinking – I don't know what that is.”

That was then. Now the single-mom of two answers questions like a pro.

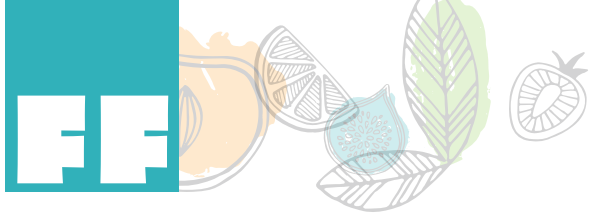
“Celiac flattens the villi, the tiny, fingerlike protrusions lining the small intestine. That means the body cannot absorb nutrients,” she says. “It's reversible, but only if you follow a gluten-free diet.”

And that, she learned, is difficult.

“Gluten is in everything,” she says. “And cross-contamination is hard to avoid.”

In addition to changing Max's diet, Paula had to revamp her kitchen.

“I learned that gluten can get into cracks or scratches on plastic or wooden kitchen utensils and non-stick cookware. I had to replace it all,” She says. “Thankfully, I had a set of stainless-steel pots and pans, but Max's grandmother bought new cookware and utensils so she could cook for him.”



It took her a year to overhaul her kitchen. Now she has a separate counter area where gluten is not allowed, she keeps Max's snacks in a separate cabinet, she bought a toaster oven so he can make pizza and chicken nuggets, and he has his own shelf in the refrigerator. His side of the table is gluten-free too. If Paula prepares something with flour for Max's older brother, 17-year-old Parker, she mixes it in the laundry room to avoid getting flour dust in the air.

"Parker has been so helpful to watch out for Max. When he has friends over he explains to them the kitchen layout and avoiding gluten," Paula says.

Besides the cost of replacing kitchen utensils and appliances, Paula says her grocery bill almost doubled.

"Packaged items that Max enjoys and can eat are almost triple the cost of the same items with gluten," she says.

Then she saw a TV news story and read a KC Star article about Emily Brown and FEI. She reached out immediately. Because she already had a doctor's diagnosis, she was approved quickly.

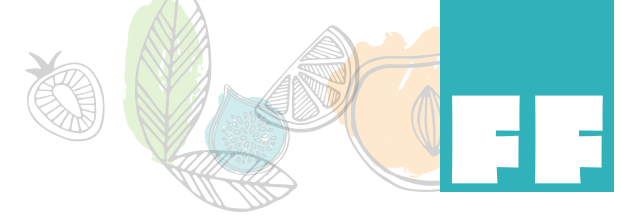


**"I learned that gluten can get into cracks or scratches on plastic or wooden kitchen utensils and non-stick cookware. I had to replace it all,"**

At that time FEI's only method of food distribution was through food pantries. Paula says her first trip to the pantry was "surreal."

"I saw a cake mix – and it was free! Gluten-free cake mixes are about \$5.00. A loaf of bread is also \$5.00 and you don't get as much as in a regular loaf of bread. They had fresh produce too. I remember taking home apples, potatoes, and peanut butter," she marvels. "It felt like such a blessing. I was so thankful that I could pick it out and not have the expense."

Now Paula loves ordering online and the convenience of the direct-to-door delivery. Max, who gets really excited when the box shows up on the front porch, enjoys Picky Bars (gluten-free granola-type bars), white



cheddar popcorn, and Aldi's LiveGfree chicken nuggets. And mac and cheese! Paula estimates that 25% of the food Max eats comes from FEI.

Although Paula is quick to count the many blessings Max has, including FEI, a supportive older brother, and family and friends who want to help, she says it's very hard to have celiac disease because of the social issues.

"You can't eat out where your friends want to go—you have to eat before, or take your own food if the restaurant doesn't have food that is safe for you to eat," she says. "Kids want to be like other kids."

**"Paula says her grocery bill almost doubled."**

That's why, in addition to social challenges, individuals with celiac disease can become depressed. [According to Beyond Celiac](#), "the risk for developing depression is 1.8 times more likely for people with celiac disease in

comparison to the general population . . . because of the significant impact on daily life and the challenges and stress that can come with managing a chronic condition and the gluten-free diet."

Paula knows this is a life-long journey that's easier when she connects with others. For her, the best way is through social media sites, like Facebook.

"I found support groups for celiac disease and gluten free both nationwide and local. People post when they have a good experience at a restaurant, so we have several that we still need to try," she says.

For anyone who is just beginning this journey, she recommends reaching out to Children's Mercy or your family doctor for other food allergy or celiac families because "they will know of shortcuts that can make your life easier." And try social media! You may find great connections.



**ABOUT SARAH**  
Sarah Guthrie is an award-winning writer and seasoned development professional. She began volunteering for FEI in 2019, where she helps with fundraising and communications. Sarah is also a dedicated food allergy mom.



## VEGAN BREAD PUDDING WITH CINNAMON RAISIN SOURDOUGH

Gristle & Gossip



This vegan bread pudding is made from scratch with under 10 ingredients, a super simple recipe to follow, and is perfect for breakfast or dessert. It's also gluten-free and made with cinnamon raisin sourdough bread from Bread Srsly, or another gluten-free cinnamon raisin bread such as Canyon Bakehouse or Trader Joe's. Serve this Vegan Bread Pudding with Cinnamon Raisin Sourdough warm with a dollop of coconut whip or brown sugar glaze for a delicious treat that your family will never guess is egg and dairy-free.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf Gluten-free, Vegan Cinnamon Raisin Sourdough Bread
- 3/4 cup Brown Sugar
- 3 cups Non-Dairy Milk full-fat coconut milk, almond milk, soy milk, OR oat milk
- 1/4 cup Flaxseed or Flaxseed meal
- 2 tbsp Vanilla Extract
- 2 tbsp Coconut oil melted
- 2 tsp Cinnamon



### NOTES

The **dark color** of this bread pudding is due to the choice of bread used. The cinnamon raisin sourdough is lightly sweetened with date syrup which causes the bread to be dark.

You will want to ensure that your bread is **fully submerged** in the liquid when baking. This will ensure that the top of the pudding doesn't cook faster than the rest.



### DIRECTIONS

Prep your fresh bread (if you are using stale, day-old, dry bread, skip this step): Cut fresh bread into cubes, place on baking sheet for 15 minutes at 250° F. Set dry bread aside.

Increase oven temperature to 350° F

In a blender, combine all other ingredients and pulse until mixed well.

Pour mixture over dried bread and allow to sit for **at least** one hour.

Pour bread pudding mixture into a 8 x 11 baking dish. Bake for 60 minutes. If not fully cooked, add an additional 10 minutes to the baking time.

Once done, remove from the oven and allow to cool.





## Allergy-Friendly Pizza Dip

Created by @emsnutfreeeats

[www.emsnutfreeeats.com](http://www.emsnutfreeeats.com)



This allergy-friendly pizza dip paired with Enjoy Life Foods Lentil Chips will take a pizza your heart! Made with vegan cheese, pizza sauce, and pepperoni, the recipe is dairy-free, gluten-free, and nut-free!

### INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz vegan cream cheese
- 2 tsp oregano
- 2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp garlic salt
- 1/2 cup vegan parmesan cheese
- 1 cup vegan mozzarella cheese
- 2 cups pizza sauce
- Pepperoni (Can use vegan pepperoni to make the dish vegan)
- 1 bag Enjoy Life Foods Lentil Chips



### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400F.

Combine softened cream cheese, spices, and 1/4 cup parmesan cheese in a small bowl. Stir until well combined.

In a medium-sized bowl, layer 1/2 of the cream cheese mixture and top with 1 cup of pizza sauce. Repeat to add another cheese and sauce layer. Top with mozzarella and the remaining parmesan cheese.

Cover with foil and bake at 400F for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven, remove foil, and add pepperoni. Switch oven to broil and bake for 5 minutes or until cheese is browned.

Pair with your favorite flavor of Enjoy Life Foods Lentil Chips!





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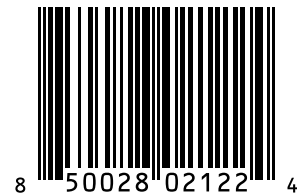


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