

DAVID RUSSELL CONTINUES TO  
DEMISTIFY THE FOOD BUSINESS.

## Ready for the new epidemic?



This month's figures released from the charity, Allergy UK, indicate 45% of the population suffers to some degree with an intolerance or allergy. The numbers are increasing 5% a year, with 50% of all those affected children – our future market. Figures from the DOH indicate 30% of the population have IBS and for half of those people diet is the cause.

But there is still confusion around the subject – let's try to demystify the key.

Heavily processed food and refined diets are strongly implicated in the growing epidemic.

What is a food allergy? It's a response (an over-reaction) within the body to a substance, which is not normally harmful itself, but results in an immune response. Shortly after exposure to the offending food the usual signals are rapid – wheezing, rashes, dizziness, runny nose, vomiting. Typical allergens are nuts, fish, eggs.

An allergic person's immune system believes allergens to be damaging and so produces a special type of antibody (IgE) to attack the invading material. This leads other blood cells to release further chemicals (including histamine) which together cause the symptoms of an allergic reaction.

'Intolerance' happens when unpleasant symptoms occur after eating a substance which your body cannot handle because the digestive system does not produce sufficient quantities of a particular enzyme that is needed to break down the food i.e. lactose deficiency (lactose intolerance), the inability to digest milk. Sugar in dairy products causes gastro-intestinal upset and diarrhoea. You can get a breath test from your doctor to check this out.

So, how does this affect our long term health or, more specifically, the health of our gut? Badly, is the answer, and it all revolves around 'leaky gut'.

All guts are leaky, it's the key to absorption of digested foods. A growing body of opinion supports the view that under certain circumstances the gut can become too leaky, allowing larger, incompletely digested food particles into the blood stream. These particles, unrecognised by the immune system, trigger the production of inflammatory antibodies called IgG's. These antibodies bind to food particles and cause the unpleasant side effects. The triggers to the internal irritation and inflammation include alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, processed food, additives, artificial chemicals, stress and some antibiotics!

Reduce your exposure to these triggers and you'll have a healthier gut.

Enter 'organic food'. Pesticides, fungicides and herbicides can irritate the gut and over tax the immune system. Many intolerances stem from food not being processed properly. Intensively bred animals (non-organic) are given lots of drugs which, in turn, enter the human food chain. As we have seen antibiotics strain the immune system, leaving it less able to function efficiently and increasing the likelihood of food sensitivity.

So where can we find these organic, free-from, foods?

➤ The Village Bakery – organic foods free from gluten, wheat, dairy and additives. [www.village-bakery.com](http://www.village-bakery.com)

➤ Doves Farm – organic wheat-free cereals, snack bars and biscuits. [www.dovesfarm.co.uk](http://www.dovesfarm.co.uk)

➤ Clearspring – guaranteed nut-free seed snacks and other specialist organic foods free from dairy, egg and wheat. [www.clearspring.co.uk](http://www.clearspring.co.uk)

➤ Organico – Ecomil dairy-free organic nut and cereal milks. [www.organico.co.uk](http://www.organico.co.uk)

My message? "listen to your body – it knows best". Get involved with National Allergy Week 21-25 May.



## Young chef whisks away industry prize

The talents of Adam Grant from the University of Birmingham were recognised at the annual Midland Association of Restaurants, Caterers, Hotels and Entertainment (MARCHE) Awards at the International Convention Centre.

The 22-year-old, from the University's Hospitality and Accommodation Services team, faced a number of tasks designed to prove his professional mettle in the stiff rounds of competition in the run up to the awards ceremony.

Adam won the Gold award in the Young Chef of the Year category, after preparing, cooking and presenting a three-course menu in one and a half hours. Adam excelled by preparing an amuse bouche of mussel and saffron soup, a starter of fillet of sea bass on sweet and sour fennel, and a main course of pork fillet with a black pudding and apple farce, cider sauce, stuffed cabbage ball creamed salsify and roast garlic fondant potato.

Adam, who has been based at the university for two years, already has an impressive career in catering, having previously worked at Michelin-starred restaurant Simpson's in Edgbaston and at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens.