**Family Tensions Around Food Allergies**

Food Allergies - When Family and Friends Don’t Understand

“I’ll just give them a bit and see what happens.” “A little bit won’t hurt.” “You just want attention.” “You’re just choosing not to eat things.”

These are all comments people have been heard to say about kids with food allergies. These are particularly scary when said by family members. I have heard about people going to family celebrations and catching grandparents, uncles or aunts trying to feed the child their known allergen, just to show they can have it and be all right.

Allergies are medically proven and can be severe and life-threatening. Who would choose to have them? No-one!

I personally, have witnessed my child turning bright red, trying to rip her itchy skin from her body and struggling to breathe while listening to her rattly stridor before lying her down and trying to stay calm and reassuring as I jabbed her leg with the EpiPen. No parent would ever choose to do that. Nor do they choose the harrowing wait for the ambulance followed by the 4 – 8 hour stint sitting around the hospital, dreading a biphasic reaction.

In some ways we are lucky that my daughter has experienced anaphylaxis because she is aware of the dangers and is particularly vigilant trying to keep herself safe. However, I have a friend with a little boy who is severely allergic to peanuts, but because he was diagnosed at such a young age, he has no understanding of what anaphylaxis is like, so it is harder for her to make him aware of the seriousness of his condition.

Being a person with food allergies is NOT a choice. They need understanding and proper medical treatments, not people who think it’s okay to give them ‘just a bit’.

“A little bit won’t hurt.”

No – It could kill!