**INTERVIEW: ALISHA’S STORY ON DAIRY AND GLUTEN INTOLERANCES**

**Background information:** Alisha suffers from asthma and her husband has atopic eczema. After giving birth to her first son, who also suffers from both asthma and eczema, she began noticing her son being severely sensitive to milk products, gluten and eggs. He would break out in uncontrollable rashes and was overall very uncomfortable. While pregnant with her second son, Alisha made a decision to actively research possible methods to limit her second son from attaining food intolerances like her first son.

**Intolerance in her children:** Alisha and her husband initially had very little knowledge about food intolerance. They have only really heard of allergies. So when their first children began growing up and experienced sensitivities to certain foods but varied from time to time, they became worried and decided to take further action. A visit to the doctors during another outbreak in rashes, the doctor would recommend the usual 1% cortisone cream for him. Alisha noted that the cream was effective sometimes and that it was not treated the symptoms and not the cause of the rashes. After several more visits to the doctor, he finally gave them a referral to the allergy unit located in RPA hospital in Sydney.

**RPHA Allergy Unit:** At RPHA, they conducted a skin prick test and a blood test for her son. Everything came back normal, which made Alisha and her husband even more confused. They were further referred to a dietician that helped them identify food intolerances in her son by introducing an elimination diet and a low chemical diet. The doctors explained to Alisha that intolerance is not the same as allergies, as it is not an immune reaction. Intolerance to certain foods is based on specific chemicals common to many different foods that can cause irritation in some people. They purchased the two books that are included in this portfolio: The Elimination Diet Handbook written by RPHA and the cookbook that complaints it.

**Elimination Diet:** Following the instructions of the doctor and the handbook**,** Alisha’s son was placed on a strict 4-week trial of having no dairy, gluten and egg products. To her surprise, his condition and rashes did not appear during that time. After the 4 weeks, the dietician recommended to start introducing small amounts of dairy and gluten slowly to his diet. At this point, her son did have some flares up but not as extreme as the ones he experienced before since he only consumed a small amount. After several weeks of trialing different foods and eliminating certain foods, the specialist at RPHA suggested that her son does indeed have dairy and gluten intolerance and that she should individually modify his diet accordingly.

**At present:** Now, Alisha and her husband are well educated in the aspect of food intolerance as it’s an on-going battle for her two sons. She also mentioned that her sons are also sensitive to certain food additives and food colouring and processed foods, which causes itchy rashes after consumption. Overall, Alisha is trying to manage both her son’s food intolerance everyday, which is not always easy, as most products must be examined thoroughly before purchasing to verify it does not contain gluten or dairy. She also directed her energy in making homemade healthy meals at home with hand picked ingredients to suit her family’s lifestyle.