



Childhood Allergies Can Be Difficult To Deal With

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Imagine feeding your baby a spoonful of cereal only to watch him get rashes and welts and struggle to breathe. It's already happened too many times to count for little Joe Tessman.

Sixteen-month-old Joe can't sit for long. He's got toys to play with and dancing to do. He's a typical toddler except when it comes to his food.

"Literally within 10 minutes he was fire-engine red from head to toe, and he had huge hives all over him," said Joe's mother Chris Tessman.

Joe is highly allergic. Chris discovered it the hard way while introducing formula to Joe when he was only 4 months old.

"There was a one-week period where he had three reactions in one week," she said. "It was terrifying to feed him."

But his milk allergy was only the beginning.

"He was allergic not only to milk again -- he was twice as allergic to milk -- he's also allergic to soy, to eggs, to wheat, to peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish," said Chris.

Joe can eat fruit and vegetables. Chris says Enjoy Life Foods are also great because they list what they "do not contain" clearly on the side of the box.

"He gets lots of fruit," she said. "Joe can have grapes, and chicken and steak."

But keeping him safe will always a challenge.

"Just to show how severe the reaction is, he had a chip the size of my thumbnail that the person that gave it to him didn't realize that there was milk in it, and we ended up having to go to the hospital," she said. "His entire face swelled up, his eyes were almost swollen shut. He was so covered with hives so bad they were like welts. He almost looked like a burn victim."

Chris isn't sharing her story so people feel sorry for Joe, but to raise awareness in others to take allergies seriously, especially when it comes to those who need taking care of.

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