

FOOD INTOLERANCES & ALLERGIES

UNDERSTANDING FOOD INTOLERANCES & ALLERGIES

A Personal Introduction from Maggie

BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



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If someone had asked me twenty years ago whether I thought food could influence how we feel physically, mentally and emotionally, I probably would have said yes—but I don't think I truly understood just how significant that relationship could be.

Food has shaped much of my life.

I developed ARFID when I was just nine years old, long before anyone recognised it as an eating disorder. At the time, I was labelled a fussy eater. People assumed I was simply being difficult or stubborn, but the reality was very different. Food felt overwhelming, unpredictable and, at times, frightening.

Years later, I was diagnosed with autism and ADHD at the age of 50. Suddenly, so many of my experiences made sense. My sensory sensitivities, my need for predictability and my relationship with food were no longer isolated experiences—they were connected pieces of the same puzzle.

As I became more curious about my own health, I also started noticing something else.

Certain foods seemed to leave me feeling physically unwell. Some affected my digestion. Others left me feeling exhausted, mentally foggy or simply unlike myself. Those experiences led me to explore food intolerances in more depth.

That journey wasn't about finding the "perfect diet" or following the latest trend. It was about understanding how my own body responded to different foods and recognising that what works well for one person may not work well for another.

Over the years, that personal curiosity has naturally become part of my professional practice. Many of the people I work with live with autism, ADHD, ARFID, anxiety or chronic stress. While food intolerances are never the whole story, they can sometimes be one important piece of a much bigger picture.

This collection isn't about telling you what you should or shouldn't eat.

It's about helping you understand the difference between allergies and intolerances, recognise common symptoms, explore the role food may play in your own wellbeing and make informed decisions based on evidence rather than fear.

I'll also share parts of my own journey because I believe lived experience has value. There is something powerful about learning from someone who has walked a similar path while also bringing professional knowledge and years of clinical experience.

My hope is that these articles help you become curious about your own body.

Not critical.

Curious.

Because every body is different.

Every nervous system is different.

Every relationship with food is different.

Understanding your own health isn't about striving for perfection. It's about listening with compassion, noticing patterns and finding what helps you feel your best.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of that journey.

Maggie Learoyd

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Testing should be considered alongside symptoms, clinical history and appropriate professional advice. A food allergy can be serious: suspected immediate allergy symptoms require medical assessment. IgG food-reactivity testing is different from diagnostic IgE allergy testing and remains debated, so results should not be used alone to diagnose illness or begin a highly restrictive diet.