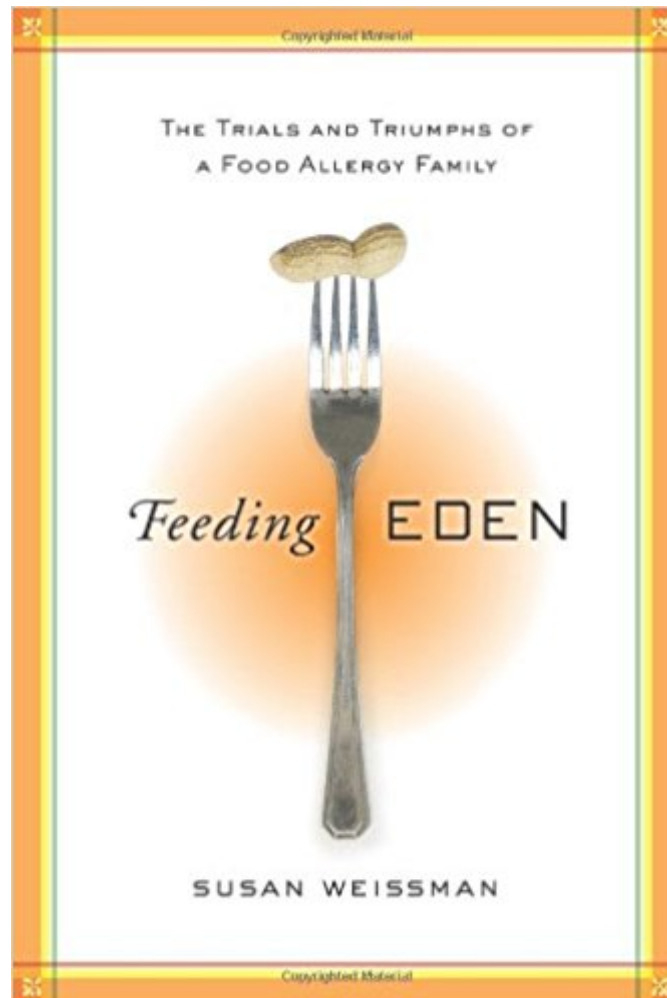




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Feeding Eden: The Trials And Triumphs Of A Food Allergy Family



Synopsis

Imagine rushing your child to the hospital, terrified for his lifeâjust because he took a mouthful of the wrong food or a few drops of milk touched his skin. Susan Weissman knows how that feels. From birth, her son Eden suffered from allergies so intense that an errant bite could be deadly: Dairy, eggs, soy, nuts, fish, shellfish, and several fruits all wreaked havoc with his body. Susan had to make food the focus of her existence just to lead him safely through a world filled with edible landmines. In *Feeding Eden*, Susan writes with poignancy, honesty, and humor about her quest to help her son--including trying a cluster of alternative therapies--as well as the effect of Eden's illness on their entire family. More than just a story for parents with severely allergic children, this is a stirring account of one woman's recipe for motherhood as she rises to a challenge she has no choice but to conquer--and successfully restores her entire family's appetite for life.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Sterling; First Edition edition (March 6, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1402781229

ISBN-13: 978-1402781223

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 6.4 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂÂ See all reviewsÂ (76 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,998,346 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 inÂ Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Children's Health > Allergies #327 inÂ Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Nutrition > Food Allergies #821 inÂ Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Allergies

Customer Reviews

The more I read of "*Feeding Eden*," the more I wondered why it hadn't been written before. I don't have a child with food allergies, but the topic is endlessly fascinating. Imagine walking through life attempting to protect your child from a fatal reaction...to foods that are healthy for (nearly) everyone else. The book ends up being a really fabulous analysis of Mother Fear, that dark stalker of moms of even healthy children. The first chapter is about the ridiculousness of trying not to be made crazy living with the risks. Weissman writes: "When I try to tout my sanity to teachers and friends--'Oh, I try not to get too crazy'--Crazy laughs its ass off in the corner."It takes a certain amount of strength

for *any* parent to get out of bed in the morning, wondering if today is the day you look away for just a split second at the wrong moment. Weissman is at her best when she's bringing these truths to light. So this is a book for all mothers, but it will have special resonance for the parents of food allergic children. For those parents, the book will become required reading. Through Weissman's self deprecating (and funny) prose, she will show you how to forgive yourself for your worries, for your insecurities and for your woes.

Feeding Eden's harrowing portrayal of the agony and terror of food allergies and other lethal autoimmune conditions is made fuller by the author's equally compelling telling of the central parental conflict that binds her to her poor son's suffering. Susan Weissman's role as a parent is complicated to a degree few of us could imagine by the food triggers of Eden's illnesses - intensifying the usual parental food and nutritional concerns to a constant, unyielding life-or-death struggle of hygiene, awareness, logistics, circumstances and maddening mystery. Eden's condition results in a physical and mental journey that few would navigate and endure with the tireless dedication and resolve Weissman demonstrates in her richly detailed and deeply researched book. Weissman writes with an endearing and candid narrative voice that makes this timely and timeless story an excellent read as well as a thought-provoking meditation on food, health, Western and Eastern medicine, marriage, parenting and, ultimately, the power of love to triumph over fear and despair. -- Jon Reiner, James Beard Foundation Award-winning author of *The Man Who Couldn't Eat*

I was very hopeful for a book that would open up the world to the experience of living with a child with a severe food allergy...mainly because people just don't get it. While there were portions that I could identify with, the text seemed more focused on the author's drama. It was exhausting to read, and the author came off more as being led around by the nose than thinking and being an assertive part of her child's diagnosis and care. While I sympathize, as I have to live this life myself, I don't think there was much help for families with new diagnoses (or suspicions of allergies). Additionally, it was very base and foul in language and analogy. Not very grown up. Sad that it was a miss, since the topic/perspective could have been so powerful - it's an important topic. I am unable to recommend it at all.

Privileged woman with multi-food allergic child feels guilt, shame, and consults with both professionals and quacks about same. One star because I finished it, even after she claimed a

healer in another state dealt with her non-allergic child's eating issues. One more because I came away grateful that my daughter only has one food allergy (I'm the one with the laundry list). Not recommended if you like science.

Thank you so much for this book! I was so inspired by it to seek out a new and better allergist for my daughter and the results were amazing! We now have a MUCH less restrictive lifestyle and diet for her, plus I'm not living every moment out of the house in constant fear! It feels so cheesy saying this, but this book really did change our lives!

This book's title and subtitle, *Feeding Eden: The Trials and Triumphs of a Food Allergy Family*, may not quite do the story justice. It's less about "feeding" than it is about "nurturing," and a more apt sub-title might be "A Mother's Story." The book is unique in that it is a memoir from the mother's perspective. Susan captures raw emotion, writing about her own vulnerabilities and what it feels like to be a parent raising a child with food allergies. While the book does contain some discussion of food, and food trials, and food handling, and food allergy diagnosis, it's not really about the food or the food allergies. It's about what it feels like to be a parent with a child whose illness can't be pinpointed. It's about spending more time in doctor's office and waiting rooms than your own home. It's about exploring the best way to help your child - and the questioning and self-doubt that comes along with every decision we make. It's about selecting treatments and finding that not everything - or every doctor - works for you. It's about being paralyzed by the fear of doing the wrong thing while at the same time being propelled by the need to take action. Throughout the book Susan shares the challenges that she and her husband faced while making choices for Eden - some that worked and others that didn't. She shares the challenges of dealing with other (possibly related) medical and developmental issues at the same time. But she portrays her choices as personal. She never claims to have the answer. She never judges. This is a highly recommended read for all parents.

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