

# understanding and managing food allergies and intolerances



For most of us, food is more than a daily necessity. We get personal pleasure from it. We nurture our children with it. And sharing it around the table is at the heart of our family and social life. For some people, though, foods can cause distressing, even dangerous, reactions, or chronic ill health, and that's why we've written this book.

Foods can upset people for many reasons. This book will help you understand more about the different kinds of reaction that can occur—food intolerance, food allergy and coeliac disease—and the various foods and food substances that can trigger them. Based on more than 20 years of experience and research at the Allergy Unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the University of Sydney, we've developed a comprehensive dietary testing and management program now in use throughout Australia for people with food reactions.

Having a food problem may restrict your food choices somewhat, but it doesn't mean you can't enjoy eating and sharing with family and friends. In this book we've provided a range of recipes for all occasions, helpful hints for food preparation, and lifestyle advice to help people living with a food problem stay well and enjoy a full and rich life.

Even if you don't have a food problem yourself, you probably have a friend or relative who does. We hope this book will provide an opportunity for everyone to learn more about 'friendly' food.

## understanding food intolerance

Understanding the difference between intolerance and other types of food reaction is an important starting point because the approach to dealing with them is quite different. Unlike allergies and coeliac disease, which are immune reactions to food proteins, intolerances don't involve the immune system at all. They are triggered by food chemicals which cause reactions by irritating nerve endings in different parts of the body, rather in the way that certain drugs can cause side-effects in sensitive people.

The chemicals involved in food intolerances are found in many different foods, so the approach involves identifying them and reducing your intake of