

What do you bring to the table?

By Diane Seely

Food. Eat. Full. Insatiable. Hunger. Words that scare me; and I'm sure that I'm correct when I tell you that most of the moms that I know would agree. These moms that I am speaking of are a band of "Proud Warriors." We are moms of children that have Prader-Willi Syndrome.

Food in itself is such a very personal thing. Some like it hot and spicy, some like it rich and saucy. Now, stay with me here, we're still talking about food.

The one universal element for mothers that have a child with PWS is that feeding our children will be the biggest obstacle that we need to address. In the beginning the infant shows no interest in eating at all. Then, the irony is that somehow it changes and they will want to eat all the time. Feeding a child with PWS means that every morsel needs to count. The difficult task is to find the balance between quality vs. quantity of the food we consume. It was this conundrum that made me commit to eating less and eating better. But first, I needed to learn just how to do that.

I started reading labels on the foods that we purchased. I had to become more aware of the portions that we served. I started a food journal and tracked our son's calorie intake daily. I made out meal plans and pre-planned menu for the week. These are all necessary steps for a family that has a child with PWS. Our entire family learned to change the way we eat while making better choices, mostly organic. Of course, not all of our food is organic. You have to pick and choose, but the bottom line is that you do what you can do.

I spent hours looking up ingredients online. I wanted to know what these substances were in our food. It was also confusing. What is the deal with high fructose corn syrup? Which is a better sugar substitute: Splenda or Stevia? What is the best brand of yogurt. I became obsessed with all the information.

I had to re-think what foods we were putting into our bodies, and to do that I had to go back a few generations. I read an article recently that said that 20 years ago an average of 2 hours was spent in the kitchen to make dinner, today most parents work outside the home, and by the time they pick up the kids, get home from work, they have about 20 minutes to get something on the table.

I'm reluctant to admit this – but we are one of those families that spend about 2 hours in the kitchen every night for dinner. We all sit down and have dinner together. Trust me, I'm no June Cleaver, and truth be told I hate cooking, but I hate the way my body feels when I eat foods like pizza even more.

I'm sure you've heard on the news that most Americans are overweight and that our modern style of living will continue to make each generation heavier than the last. It leads me to believe that what you bring to the table is the legacy that you will leave to your children.

For years I had a bowl of fruit on my kitchen table. You know, like you see in all the Better Homes and Garden magazines, in those fabulous staged kitchens? I can distinctly remember having to take it away. You won't find any food on my countertops. Out of sight out of mind.