



Fed up with not being able to find somewhere safe to eat, two friends have set up a new website aimed at making life easier for people with food allergies. **Catherine Scott** reports



HELP ONLINE: From left, Karen Woodford, daughter Megan, two, and Kay Harrison who all suffer from food intolerance.

TWO childhood friends who were both diagnosed with coeliac disease in their 30s are on a mission to make it easier for fellow food allergy sufferers to eat out.

Karen Woodford and Kay Harrison's new website www.SaferEating.co.uk allows people to search for and share places that offer gluten and other free-from options.

"After I was diagnosed with coeliac disease and lactose intolerance, I pretty much stopped eating out," explains Karen, 35, an NHS health professional.

"I'd either end up eating a depressing plain baked potato or I'd be accidentally glutened by well-meaning staff who didn't understand cross-contamination. I knew there had to be places out there that I could trust to cater for a tricky eater, but it was a struggle to find them."

Kay, 35, a journalist from Howden, said: "Before I was diagnosed, I was a features editor and would review restaurants in London. Discovering I was coeliac put an end to that part of my job, sadly. But in the space of a few years, more restaurants, cafes and bars, are coming to realise the potential of the free-from market. Yet finding these places is still a major problem."

Karen had suffered from debilitating stomach problems since she first met Kay at Keswick School in

PUTTING SAFER EATING ON MENU

Cumbria. Despite seeing GPs and specialists, it took 22 years before they realised her symptoms were due to coeliac disease, not IBS. Her two-year-old daughter, Megan, who is Kay's goddaughter, has also just been diagnosed coeliac. Kay's problems started in her late 20s and tests

confirmed she had coeliac disease just months later. Like many coeliacs, Karen and Kay are also intolerant to lactose, which means they cannot have anything containing milk products.

"Karen and I have had some really cringeworthy moments eating out, with staff either

not having a clue about our needs or making us feel guilty for making requests. But at the other end of the spectrum, we've had some brilliant service and meals that we would love to share with fellow tricky eaters."

As well as connecting businesses to customers through a simple search tool and directory, www.SaferEating.co.uk also offers expert advice to caterers and up-to-date guidance on allergens. The Safer Eating team also includes dietitians, free-from experts and leaders in eCommerce.

Food businesses can sign up now for no charge and add their details to get on the free-from radar.

"My daughter's diagnosis has given me that extra drive with Safer Eating," continues Karen who lives in Leeds.

"I want her to be able to eat out in confidence. To eat out and not miss out. I guess, in a way, Kay and I are lucky in that we're best friends with the same disease. We've been able to share tips and advice on gluten and lactose-free eating. And Safer Eating is going to be an extension of that too, with forums and reviews and recipes.

"We want it to be the go-to site for people with dietary requirements, either due to allergy, intolerance, coeliac disease or any health reason, or through choice, such as vegetarians and vegans."

ONE-THIRD SUFFERING PROBLEMS

A FOOD allergy is a rapid and potentially serious response to a food by your immune system.

It can trigger a rash, wheezing and itching or something more serious.

Food intolerances are more common.

The symptoms of food intolerance tend to come

on more slowly, often many hours after eating the problem food.

Typical symptoms include feeling bloated and stomach cramps.

One-third of UK households are now affected by a food allergy or intolerance, according to new research by YouGov.

Beauty Update

Beauty advice to help Look Good Feel Better

LAST night I took part in a special event called Theatre of Beauty at Harvey Nichols in Leeds, all in aid of the Look Good Feel Better charity, which provides practical support for women dealing with the effects of cancer treatment. I've been researching skin-care, hair and make-up advice by asking friends who have had cancer what worked for them, and also by talking to beauty company experts about what they like to recommend. So, I've picked out these five products as my suggestions that might help with side-effects, especially post-treatment and during recovery, to give a beauty boost. Hope it helps.

– Stephanie Smith

1: Illamasqua False Eyes Lashes No 7

THESE give a natural look and come with a latex-free glue. Let the glue dry a minute on the lash border, apply the inner corner and move outwards, pressing along the top lid line.

Apply a little shadow with a thin brush to set and cover. They cost £12 at Illamasqua in the VQ leads and online.



2: BareMinerals Foundation Powder

BAREMINERALS Original SPF 15 Foundation is free of preservatives, talc, oil, waxes, fragrances and irritants. Silky, adjustable coverage, so you can put more on pigmentation. It gives a natural, luminous finish, lasts for ages, and costs £25 at Harvey Nichols and www.bareescentuals.co.uk



3: HD Brows Eye and Brow Palette

FOR brows that need creating or rebuilding, this offers a combination of five products which can be used to build up or blend into eyebrow hairs, giving a natural appearance. It also includes a setting wax so sparse hairs don't stray and comes in natural shades. It's £25 at www.hdbrows.com



4: John Frieda Luxurious Volume

THIS Thickening Blow Dry Lotion thickens the hair shafts, to give fullness and it also has heat shield technology that protects from heat styling. It's a non-sticky spray that allows hair to volumise and shine while keeping it healthy as you blow-dry. It costs £5.99 at Boots.



5: Babyliss Root Boost mini-crimper

THIS is a little crimping iron that you use to crimp just a little above the roots of your hair to create volume there. You don't crimp the top layer, so you don't see the volumising crinkles underneath. Great for parties. Use also on in-between wash days, followed by dry shampoo. It's £25, Boots, Argos.

