

MEDIA RELEASE – TOP 8 CHALLENGE APPEAL

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Can you remove the Top 8 allergenic foods and live a day in the life of someone with an eosinophilic disorder?

That is the question that **ausEE**, the first Australian support network for people living with Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorders (EGID), is asking in their Top 8 Challenge!

Most of the children who suffer from an EGID do not eat a normal diet. Most of them have severe food restrictions which makes it hard on physical, emotional and social levels. Some of them can't eat any food at all and are fed through a tube inserted in their stomach.

Symptoms vary greatly, but can include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal or chest pain, reflux, difficulty swallowing, failure to thrive, poor appetite and food impaction. Eosinophilic oEsophagitis is the most common EGID, the current* estimated prevalence is 1–4 cases per 10,000 individuals.

There is NO CURE for EGID, but the goal of treatment is to alleviate symptoms and allow these children to live with LESS or NO PAIN. One of the MAIN treatment options patients follow is an Elimination diet which can mean removing the Top 8 common allergenic foods*.

The charity asks that for one day only, you DON'T EAT any of the Top 8 - this means NO milk, NO eggs, NO soy, NO wheat, NO peanuts, NO tree nuts, NO shellfish and NO fish for 24 hours! By proposing this challenge the charity aims to bring awareness to these often unheard of disorders and raise much needed funds for the charity.

Funds raised through the appeal will be utilised to fund Australian medical research into eosinophilic gastrointestinal disorders and to aid the charity in providing support and information to anyone diagnosed with or caring for a child with one of these life altering conditions. In addition to the serious physical signs and symptoms of an EGID; it is a challenge to live in a society that focuses on food; those living with an EGID know only too well how difficult it can be.

The charity's website www.ausee.org provides information on the disorders, links and relevant resources including communication forums.

To learn more about the challenge and to take part, please visit www.top8challenge.com

*Sources: <http://www.allergy.org.au/content/view/168/1/>, 2007 Consensus Recommendations for Treatment of Eosinophilic Esophagitis

* **ausEE** is a registered Australian charity and non-profit organisation.