An answer at last

Doctors' appointments had become a regular frustration for Pagan Brewis. Time after time she had been told there was nothing wrong with her ill 15-month-old son, Levi, affectionately known as 'Bug'.

But the Echuca resident knew there was something wrong when he was about eight weeks old. He would scream each night from 11pm to 6am until he was six months old. He had terrible eczema, which would get so bad it would weep, and he was constantly vomiting and constipated.

He would sleep excessively and was developing the way his older brother Parker, now almost three, did. Levi did not sit up on his own until he was nine months old.

Ms Brewis estimated she visited the doctors clinic about 20 times when Levi was between two and seven months old.

“I’ve been to the doctors many times and they all told me nothing was wrong with him,” Ms Brewis said.

It was thankfully due to the instincts of one doctor that Ms Brewis was referred to a gastroenterologist in Melbourne to assess Levi’s situation.

Last month, it was discovered Levi had a condition called eosinophilic esophagitis, meaning his esophagus is highly allergic to most foods.

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Lots of ‘Bug’ hugs for Levi

Photo: HOLLY CURTIS


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Levi’s esophagus is bumpy like corrugated iron, rather than smooth like a regular person. It means he can gag on food, sometimes he can’t swallow and get his way all the time.

He is allergic to dairy, soy and wheat and has anaphylactic reactions to eggs and peanuts.

It was particularly difficult to keep Levi from eating chocolate during Easter, Ms Brewis said, especially in one instance when chocolate was offered by a stranger who knew no better.

Ms Brewis will need to take Levi to specialist appointments every fortnight for the next eight weeks, and he will need to eat a specialised diet for the rest of his life.

He takes a puff twice a day, and medication if he has a reaction to something he has eaten.

“Something has to keep Maiden out of his reach,” Ms Brewis said.

Ms Brewis said she wanted to bring awareness to the condition, as well as to urge other parents to seek answers for their children when they know something was wrong.

For Ms Brewis and Levi, they will have to live with a major lifestyle change. “We’ve just had to adjust,” Ms Brewis said.