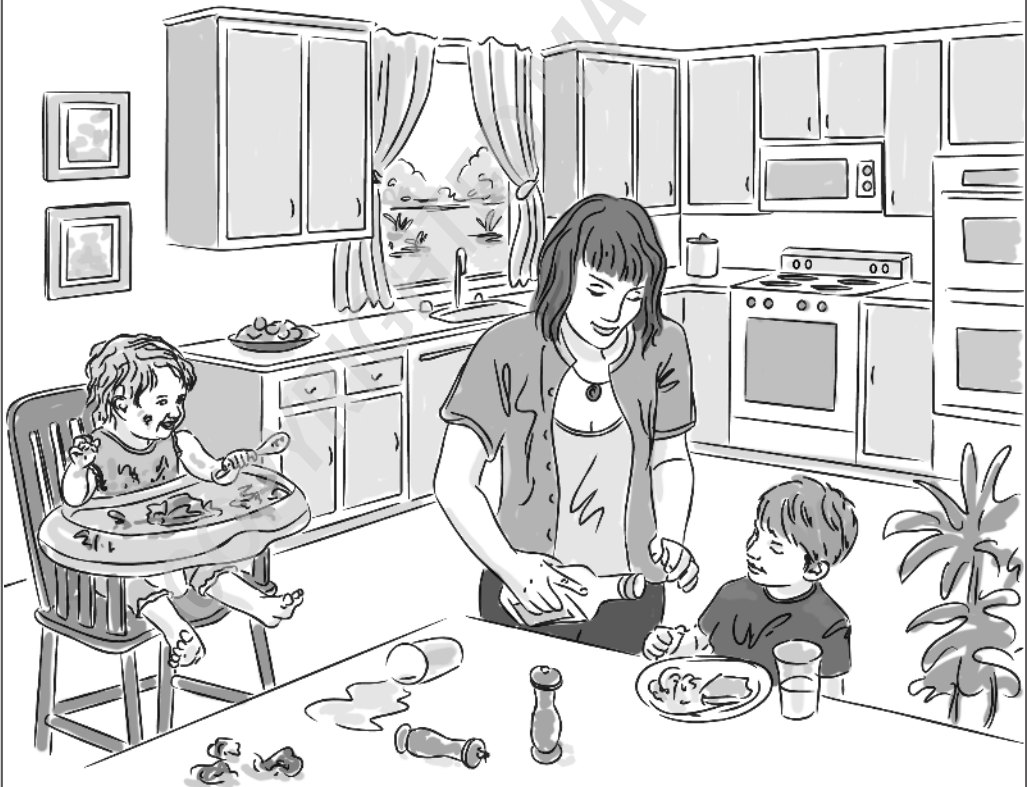


# How Nutritional Intelligence Benefits Your Family





# The Journey Toward *Feeding Baby Green*

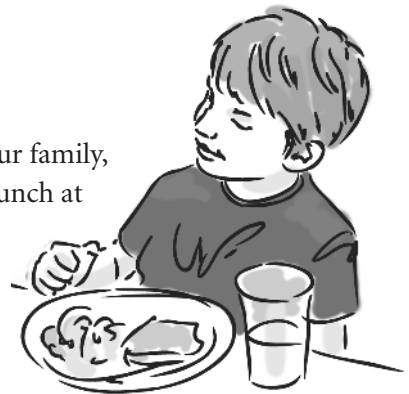
To get an idea of how *Feeding Baby Green* may help your family, imagine your child a few years down the road, eating lunch at school. Most of her friends have snagged French fries or chips to complement their meals. Instead, your daughter reaches for a salad and a yogurt.

Without you there to remind her, without her deliberating, she's made a healthy food choice because that's what she's learned to love.

Or imagine your young son at a local restaurant, ordering Brussels sprouts, or a fresh egg dish with mango salsa. He's *excited* to try the new flavors, *wants* to eat fresh, wholesome food.

For many parents, these scenarios seem almost unbelievable. Brussels sprouts? And no French fries? But these examples come from my own family, when my daughter, Claire, was in high school and our youngest, Austin, was a middle schooler. More than one chef has come to the table and complimented them on their adventurous palates and excellent taste. Other parents are even more likely to comment.

Parents today assume that children just won't enjoy certain foods for one reason or another (taste, genetic predisposition, because they are kids,





and so on). They feel that they have to provide them with kids' meals, or endure food battles, or trick them by disguising the food so they'll eat it.

*Feeding Baby Green* will show you how to start creating an enjoyment of healthy foods even before birth. Their comfort foods can be healthy foods. Your kids won't need to settle for junk food. You won't have to resort to subterfuge, hiding healthy foods in comfort foods, if you want kids to eat fruits and vegetables. You won't need a team of medical or scientific experts or your own Ph.D. in nutrition to be able to feed your baby correctly. What you will need is an awareness of how food preferences develop over time, and a plan for how to use this knowledge to give your baby the best start. Knowing how it all works can empower you to be your own expert when it comes to feeding your child.

By starting early—even before birth—not only can you teach them to love appropriate amounts of healthful foods, but you can also help set the trajectories of their

- Health
- Intelligence
- Weight and metabolism
- Allergies and immune system

After you finish *Feeding Baby Green* you'll understand the simple plan to give your children the amazing gift of nutrition that will last a lifetime. *Feeding Baby Green* will create the blueprint for the generation that revolutionizes the way kids eat—a delicious revolution.

## What Is “Baby Food”?

“Baby food” is a myth. A useful myth, perhaps, but it's worth pulling back the curtain to reveal that baby food was an invention of twentieth-century food corporations. The modern idea that babies should get entirely different fruits and different vegetables and different seasonings than what the rest of the family is eating is about as modern as the Gerber baby.<sup>1</sup>

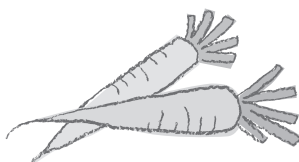
When my father was born, “baby food” was rare. By the time I was a baby, in the late 1950s, a particular style of jarred baby food had become a shared rite of passage. In just one generation we had a change in how we

feed babies that was so dramatic and so pervasive that it now seems like it has always been this way.

The fact is, babies don't need to eat baby food, particularly factory-made baby food from a little jar. Throughout the long, successful history of our species, babies have done remarkably well without it. We have always had food for babies, of course, but what we think of as baby food is a recent shared myth, made tangible as commercial products.

Before baby food, before kids' meals at fast-food restaurants, before infant formula, indeed in every century but part of the last, most young babies were breastfed, either by their mothers or a wet nurse. Later, after some teeth had come in, these babies began to eat much of what their parents ate—though the texture was changed to accommodate their young and growing mouths. And what these babies ate varied with the season of the year, depending on what was available locally.

When store-bought baby food was introduced, this innovation was embraced by parents and pediatricians alike because it offered a convenient, modern way to feed a baby. It seemed sterile, scientific, safe, and clean. And commercial baby food held out the gleaming promise of providing all the important fruits and vegetables all year round. The baby-food aisle in the supermarket had a shiny sameness—far removed from the earthy biologic rhythms of the farm, or of the breast.



“You can’t, with ordinary home equipment, prepare vegetables as safe, as rich in natural food values, as reliably uniform as ready-to-serve Gerber products!” declared an early baby-food ad in *Ladies’ Home Journal*.<sup>2</sup> The idea was that good baby food was scientific, uniform, measurable, twice-boiled, and perfectly smooth—and that you couldn’t do it yourself no matter how hard you tried.

This way of thinking undermines people’s confidence in being able to do something as basic as feeding their own baby. The task seems difficult, complicated, and exhausting. And the work entailed wouldn’t just be bad for you alone. Another ad warned: “For Baby’s Sake, Stay Out

of the Kitchen! It isn't fair to baby—really—to spend long hours in the kitchen . . . For baby's sake and for your own—learn what doctors tell young mothers just like you.” People who know better than you do say that it's better for food preparation not to intrude on your time with your baby. I've got a contrasting view.

It's important for a baby to see a real, yellow banana. To touch its skin. To smell its (to us) faint aroma. To see Mom peel the banana and playfully feed a chunk to Dad (or vice versa). To see Dad mash some with a fork and take a bite, perhaps with a dash of cinnamon, if you want to get fancy. For Mom to feed a bite of this not-uniform mash to the baby and to see her baby's grin.

Maybe it's a sweet potato. Let your baby see and feel its dark skin first. Then steam it (or microwave it for five minutes, if you like). See together how bright orange it is inside! Mash with the same fork. Maybe a little sprinkle of nutmeg or ginger. Or cinnamon. Or just serve plain—grins either way. And the simple leftovers will last several days in the fridge, or a month or more in the freezer.

Or maybe a steamed carrot . . .

Bringing real food into your family's life can be fun and energizing. It can take minutes, not hours, minutes that are well spent. It can provide better nutrition than what you would get from a pre-cooked food in a jar or a plastic tub. It can connect and draw people together. It can silently teach deep lessons about life and love and health.

You will probably end up choosing a combination of ways to feed your baby: many as simple as a mashed avocado, some that are more complicated recipes made at home, and some from among the better fresh or frozen ready-made baby foods you can buy (especially for when you are on the go).

But the fundamental difference with the ads above is that it's all your choice, your creativity, your control. And food is fun. It's messy. It's real. It's not supposed to be a chemistry experiment, concocted in beakers and flasks, but one of life's most frequent pleasures. A pleasure to be enjoyed and savored. A pleasure with the power to connect. Its place is near the center of a family's life, not as a distraction to be pushed to the outer margins.

Commercial baby food entered the scene as part of the larger processed, preserved, convenience food movement. It separated parents from their children. It trained babies to become ideal consumers of the low-quality foods you see many children and teens eating today. And much baby food found in today's supermarkets is still stuck in this twentieth-century industrial nutrition mind-set.



*Gwen Greene holding baby Alan. Taken in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1959.*

## **My Own Journey Toward *Feeding Baby Green***

My parents were married in 1957—the same year that margarine sales first exceeded butter sales in the United States, General Foods introduced Tang breakfast drink as a scientific improvement over fresh-squeezed orange juice, and Kentucky Fried Chicken began selling chicken in buckets as a substitute for cooking dinner at home. In just a few months, the artificial sweetener Sweet’n Low would be introduced, along with the first diet cola.<sup>3</sup> A non-dairy coffee creamer wouldn’t be far behind.

As I was preparing to enter this world, Pizza Hut first opened its doors, destined to become the world’s largest pizza restaurant chain (and the world’s largest user of cheese).<sup>4</sup> Domino’s Pizza would be founded soon afterwards. General Mills introduced Cocoa Puffs cereal for kids, containing 43 percent sugar. Kellogg quickly followed with Cocoa Krispies, delivering 45.9 percent sugar.<sup>5</sup>

## One Baby's Story

I was born in 1959, the same year that Enfamil launched its first infant formula and McDonald's opened its one hundredth restaurant.<sup>6</sup> That was also the same year that Hormel & Co. proudly sold its one billionth can of Spam (announcing that "94 percent of Americans" now enjoy Spam, but not mentioning that the processed meat product only contained 6 to 8 percent ham).<sup>7</sup>

The nation glowed with the optimism of science. In earlier decades, breast milk substitutes had been called artificial foods; now they were percentage formulas—science's improvements on breast milk. The great majority of mothers bought into this myth (literally) and chose these formulas for their babies over their own milk. These babies were now being raised on the steady, uniform taste of an infant formula, not the subtle, shifting rainbow of flavors found in breast milk.

For the first three months of my life, my mother had breastfed me exclusively. She was told by my doctor that it would be time to wean to formula at three months. She did start me on the bottle then, but she couldn't bring herself to stop nursing for another couple of months. I last nursed at five months old. At six months, my doctor told my mother it was time to wean from the bottle to a cup, using whole milk straight from the carton. No more formula, no more sterilizing the glass bottles.

My first bite of solids was the bland taste of processed white rice flour: boxed instant rice cereal, marketed as the best first food for babies. Along with other babies of my generation, I soon graduated to the salty, sugary, starchy tastes of overcooked jarred fruits and vegetables. My parents went along because, as experts and ads proclaimed, "They're the finest vegetables Baby can eat—and Baby deserves the best!"<sup>8</sup>

A shopping list survives from my early childhood. It was for the first day of a trip to visit my grandmother in Atlanta at my first birthday. It's striking to me that the only item we shared as a family was the milk. All of the vegetables and all of the fruit were entirely different.

It doesn't surprise me that just a few years later my favorite foods were canned fruit cocktail (in heavy syrup), pizza, SpaghettiOs, Wonder Bread, cheeseburgers, French fries, Twinkies, Ho Hos, and Hostess pies. My sisters' favorites were canned B&M baked beans and ultra-smooth instant mashed potatoes made from potato buds (which taste eerily similar to the instant white rice cereal of our first foods).



Monday A.M.

Apr. 25, '60

Dearest Mother,

We have reservations on Delta's flight 729 on Wednesday, April 27, arriving there at 7:10 PM EST. Hope you can meet us all right. We'll look for you at the usual place — the baggage pick-up stand outside the terminal there.

It would be a tremendous help if you could buy some <sup>in advance</sup> baby food and have some on hand for at least the day after we arrive. Get the following if you can:

- 2 JARS GERBER'S STRAINED EGG YOLKS
- 2 " " JUNIOR PEACHES
- 2 JARS " STRAINED VEAL OR LAMB
- 1 " " STRAINED PEAS

The first page of a shopping list that Gwen Greene sent to her mother in preparation for a family visit to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1960.



*Alan Greene eating animal crackers, 1961.*

## **My First Nutrition Decisions: Connections to the Past**

During my preschool years, the food industry was industrious. Frito-Lay, Inc., was founded when I was two, introducing snack foods that would fill the lunchboxes of children across America. McDonald's one *billionth* hamburger was served by Ray Croc on television in 1963.

Cool Whip, an artificial substitute for whipped cream, was introduced when I was in first grade, and within only three months it was outselling all other whipped topping products. The Pillsbury Doughboy (Poppin' Fresh) was born that same year, a friendly, giggling marketing reminder that busy parents can save time by choosing tasty processed food products. Pillsbury crescent rolls made many visits to our family table during those years.<sup>9</sup>

My elementary school's food didn't have colors. We had a stainless steel cafeteria line with steam trays and a lunch lady. It's all steel and grey-green-brown-beige in my memory, warm and smooth and uniform.

I remember sliding the celery-green school lunch trays with their compartments to separate the entrée, two sides, and a dessert. The vegetables were overcooked and soggy, and often had a stringy texture that made

them seem inedible to a kid (and yucky even now). It didn't matter much what was on the menu (except the longed-for pizza day, once a month).

More often than not, my sisters and I brought our own lunches with us to school. My mom prepared a fresh sandwich, and sent us packing with a small bag of chips, a piece of fruit, and packaged dessert.

## **There Was Something About That Sandwich, Though . . .**

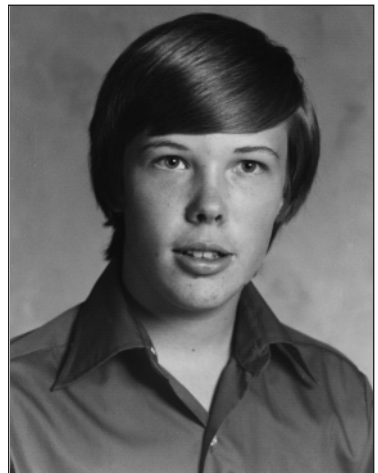
When I look back over my entire food childhood through the haze of memory, a few wonderful flavors stand out. We had a small garden in the back yard as I was growing up. I remember playing in the dirt with my father and planting seeds with a trowel. I remember pulling weeds every now and then, drenched with sweat, gnats buzzing about in the humid summers of the Washington, D.C., area. I remember laughing and chasing my sisters through the backyard sprinklers afterwards to cool off. And getting stitches in my knee from an enthusiastic run at a Slip 'n Slide.

And the lettuce! Before the summer we first had lettuce in our garden, I would only eat iceberg lettuce in Mom's sandwiches, and then only as a barely tolerated, barely tasted obstacle to the good stuff—a particular favorite was sliced turkey or meatloaf with lettuce, tomato, mustard, mayonnaise, and pickle.

But the lettuce I picked in our garden actually tasted different. It tasted really good to me. It made sandwiches better. It still brings a tear to my eye when I think of the sandwiches my mom made—and when she makes one for me now, as she did recently for my father and me to take to a baseball game, it transports me back to the summers of my childhood.

Another essential sandwich ingredient was . . . the tomatoes! We grew them from seeds, poking each one into the dark soil and splashing them with water. We

*Alan Greene in middle school, Bethesda, Maryland,  
around 1974.*





*Greene kids ready to “work” in the garden of their Bethesda, Maryland, home in 1968. Standing: Alan Greene. From left to right in wheelbarrow: neighbor Linda Zell, Laura Greene, Lisa Greene.*

marveled as the plants grew, the tomatoes appeared, and began to change from green to red. We learned the difference between the “mostly red” of almost ripe, and the “vivid red” of a firm, ripe tomato ready to explode with flavor.

In the lunchroom, I always held on to Mom’s sandwiches with the home-grown, hard-earned lettuce and tomato, but I admit to sometimes trading my fruit with friends to try to score some extra sugar or salt. I’d also look for ways to finagle more opportunities for sugary, salty snacks after school.

## **But What Are They Putting in My Food?**

I loved my mom’s sandwiches, but my preference for the processed foods I was weaned on still ran deep. The Quarter Pounder, introduced in 1971, became my number one sandwich choice.<sup>10</sup> Pop Rocks were my favorite treat, and I loved M&M’s. When Red Dye No. 2 was banned in 1976

because it could cause cancer and red M&M's disappeared for more than a decade, I grieved—but I took notice. I also paid attention when cyclamate, a very popular artificial sweetener, was banned because it was then thought to cause cancer. It's the first time I can remember ever thinking about the various unknown ingredients in my food.

I had also noticed when the pesticide DDT was banned because it was killing birds. I had been moved by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the

## Feeding Baby Green Report

### The DES Story



I certainly didn't connect my growing worry over food additives with a news story about the prescription drug diethylstilbestrol (DES). In an attempt to prevent miscarriages, this synthetic hormone had been given to up to ten million pregnant women in the United States since well before I was born. The hormone had been shown not to prevent miscarriages in 1952, but continued to be prescribed for that purpose anyway. How could a little dose of hormones hurt? And what does that have to do with the food I was eating as a kid?

We learned of the side effects of DES when it was too late: DES daughters were less fertile; the women who took it had an increase in breast cancer; and the grandsons of women who took DES were twenty times more likely to be born with hypospadias (where the opening of the penis isn't at the tip, but somewhere along the shaft). Doctors stopped prescribing DES to pregnant women in 1971 because it was found to cause vaginal cancer in DES daughters as young as eight years old.<sup>11</sup>

Giving DES to pregnant women was a tragic mistake.

I didn't suspect at all, and even today most people don't know, that DES was also given to our cattle. By the mid-1950s, about two-thirds of U.S. beef cattle were given DES. Hundreds of millions of Americans were getting small amounts of DES every day—without adequate safety testing. And when DES was stopped for pregnant women, it continued to be used in our cattle for the rest of the decade.<sup>12</sup>

I loved burgers. I was probably getting DES quite often.



definitive environmental awareness book of the 1960s. Like many of his generation, my father had been raised on a farm. Like so many in my generation, I was raised in the suburbs. At the time, we called it “progress.” Part of this progress involved a veritable explosion of new chemicals in our environment. Many of them were in our foods or used in food production, and many had never been tested for health or safety. I knew of only three that had been banned, but it was enough to set me wondering if we really knew what we were doing.

As a student, I started asking questions about chemicals in our food and environment. I wrote papers, even running for student council president in the ninth grade on a platform that included better food in our cafeteria. But back then, we just didn’t have the information that we do now to be able to make connections about our food and our health. Food industry giants were creating more and more synthetic ingredients for our dinner tables, but regulations did not require the companies to list ingredients on the label. I guess they thought we didn’t need to know, and that if we did, we wouldn’t make wise (or profitable) decisions with the information. After all, the companies said the synthetic ingredients were as good (or better!) than the all-natural originals, just as they told us partially hydrogenated margarines and trans-fat artificial creamers were the perfect substitutes for butter and cream.

Even though I knew about DDT and Red Dye No. 2, my unconscious cravings never listened. By high school, the pretense of my eating fruit and vegetables at school had disappeared. Hot dogs or cheeseburgers on white buns, slices of pepperoni or cheese pizza, fries, and soda were the typical lunch fare, occasionally punctuated with spaghetti or meat loaf. I continued to eat pretty well at home and on the weekends, but when left to make my own choices, I went back to the processed flavors and textures of my infant and toddler years.

I headed off to college at Princeton in 1977. For the first time, I made all of my own food choices twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Where I got into trouble was the Commons, a large gothic hall with a seemingly limitless supply of the food I craved the most. The food wasn’t great, but I could satisfy my yearnings. I can’t remember even once choosing any vegetables or fruits or whole grains there. But I loved the meats and pizza and sandwiches and potatoes—and oh! the berry pies—does that count as fruit?

Just like many kids today, I chose unhealthful foods that affected my body systems and my weight. Not until my last two years as an undergraduate at Princeton did I learn to appreciate real foods over processed. This was the result of getting a part-time job in a kitchen. In my junior year, I joined Charter Club, one of Princeton's eating clubs, and worked in the kitchen to help foot the bill. I learned from Chef Steve what went into creating a balanced, varied monthly meal plan. I was involved in everything at Charter, from the meal planning to the dish scrubbing.

Like watching the tomatoes ripening with my father, being involved in creating the meals increased my appreciation of the end product as well as my understanding of the process. I began to prefer the taste of real food,

## Feeding Baby Green Report

### And Then, as 1980 Rolled Around ...



Four other things happened while I was in college to further deplete the average American diet:

1. Coca-Cola began replacing half of the sugar in Coke with high fructose corn syrup, because sugar had gotten so expensive. This new ingredient would quickly become a major source of kids' calories.
2. The FDA approved aspartame (NutraSweet), another chemical ingredient that would be consumed in large quantities by millions.
3. McDonald's launched Chicken McNuggets, and they were an overnight smash hit.
4. The USDA, under President Ronald Reagan, declared that ketchup could be counted as a vegetable in school lunches.

Meanwhile, I decided to go to medical school.



thoughtfully prepared. It brought to mind the dinners my mother prepared, and, of course, those wonderful sandwiches. I was finally making a connection with other food memories from my childhood.

## Medical Training and Firsthand Experience

I studied medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, which featured excellent nutrition teaching. Nevertheless, nutrition was a tiny part of my medical studies, and soon a tiny part of my life. The pace of training often led to vending machine meals or mediocre hospital cafeteria fare when we had the luxury of time.

My first son, Garrett, was born while I was in medical school. My first glimpse of him was a profound moment, but in those early days as a new dad, I had no idea of the scope of the new territory I was to discover with him and the three others to come. I delighted in teaching my son Garrett how to throw a ball, make animal noises, and recite the alphabet. As a doctor in training, I especially loved teaching him about his body parts (“Where is your sternum?” “Point to your appendix.”). While I was an intern, I taught him to read, to add, and to brush his own teeth. But when Garrett was young, I didn’t understand that teaching him about great food was one of the best lessons I could have provided.

Garrett learned his lessons about food from what we fed him. In 1986, we did what most other parents were doing. We introduced one food at a time, one taste at a time. We fed him so much of a single jarred vegetable that his skin literally turned a bit orange.

Thankfully, the baby-food companies had stopped adding so much extra salt to their foods for the youngest babies in 1977, but the brand we used continued to add it to the jars he began to eat from soon afterwards.<sup>13</sup>

My son also learned from what he saw us buy and eat. As a busy medical student, intern, and then resident, I regressed to eating a typical rushed American diet—with more convenience foods, snack foods, fast foods, and junk foods than I wished, and not enough fruit and even fewer vegetables. My habits were reflected in Garrett’s food preferences.

I was more interested in nutrition than many of my colleagues in med school. I went out of my way to pursue extra learning in the subject. Still, I knew too little. And what I did know was often pushed aside by habit and a busy schedule. And Garrett was eating the way I was by the time he was two.





*Alan Greene holding his first child, Garrett, moments after birth. Taken at the University of California, San Francisco, Medical Center Hospital in 1986.*

## When I Decided to Take Charge

Over the years my family grew. After Garrett, along came Kevin (the easy-to-please omnivore), then Claire (who really loves vegetables—and good chocolate), and finally, the adventurous Austin. With each child I knew more about nutrition and health and learned more about life from each of them. After I finished my training, my own diet had gotten healthier, and so had the family's.

In March 1996, something happened that radically accelerated changes in my personal food trajectory. Cheryl was nursing Austin. She and I were enjoying working together, both in parenting together as well as on our pioneering physician Web site, DrGreene.com (with Cheryl, the heart and soul of the site, handling the design, and me answering the questions). Life was good—no, great!

... until Cheryl discovered a lump in her breast. A chill went down our spines. Since many lumps prove to be benign, we hoped for the best. But the results of Cheryl's biopsy hit us like a truck.



*From left to right: Claire, John, Gwen, Alan, Garrett, Austin, and Kevin Greene (Cheryl behind the camera). Taken in our backyard in 2006. On the menu: a selection of barbecued veggie burgers, barbecued chicken breast sandwiches, or barbecued hamburgers accompanied by salad, grilled summer vegetables, fresh corn on the cob, and watermelon. Every bite organic!*

Cheryl had cancer. Stage III, high-risk, inflammatory breast cancer. The prognosis was grim. She was diagnosed in March, and not expected to live to see the New Year.

I helped Cheryl navigate through the best treatment options. Over the next year, she had four surgeries, thirty-eight radiation treatments, and ten harrowing months of intensive chemotherapy, followed by another eighteen months of experimental therapy.

Against all odds, Cheryl survived her cancer, and today, years later, is an ever more vibrant, giving woman. She is still the heart and soul of DrGreene.com. We're grateful every day for the opportunities we've had since 1996. Her cancer has changed us forever.

But that first night in March 1996 when we heard the diagnosis we had no idea what the future held. Her doctors told us in no uncertain terms that she must stop nursing. With tears in her eyes, she turned to me and asked,

*"What do we feed our baby?"*

As a pediatrician, I'd been asked that question by parents many times, but when Cheryl posed the question that night, it took on a new urgency. It started me on a path toward understanding the central role that nutrition plays in everyone's life, from potential mothers to preschoolers and beyond.



## How This Book Developed

This book grew from my search for answers to that profound question, a search that began the same year that Dolly the sheep became the first mammal cloned from an adult animal, and that genetically modified foods first entered the market. When my last son was born, no one was eating genetically modified food; today more than 30 percent of our cropland is already planted with genetically modified crops, and most Americans eat genetically modified foods every day.

Our personal changes began right away, but my understanding of the importance of the food that we provide for our babies took much longer to develop into the strong, science-based system that you'll find in this book. As recently as 2000 I worked with Gerber to educate parents about the staging of foods according to what were then accepted guidelines of starting only one new food at a time, separated by several days, and of delaying certain foods such as egg whites, peanuts, or fish beyond the first birthday—or longer. I no longer agree with those out-of-date guidelines, but you may happen upon them in a Web search some day and you need to know that for me, this has been a long journey.

## What Was in the Baby Food Jar?

As soon as Austin could eat solid food, jarred organic baby food was his standard fare, though we emphasized a variety of flavors and made some of our own. In February 1996, while Austin was still eating baby food, Marion Burros wrote a fascinating column in the *New York Times*:

THIS is not a trick question:

If you had a choice between feeding your baby a jar of mashed bananas that contained 80 to 90 percent bananas and one that contained 50 percent bananas, which would you choose?

And this is not a trick answer:

The vast majority of parents in this country choose the jar with 50 percent bananas, the rest sugar and modified food starch. That is what is sold by the Gerber Products Company, which controls about 70 percent of the baby-food market.<sup>14</sup>

Salt, sugar, modified food starch, and other thickeners were common ingredients in jarred baby or toddler food in those days, not so long ago. They were probably very common when you were a baby.

Our taste buds naturally steer us toward sweet and salty foods. These baby and toddler foods exploited the landscape of the tongue, and created artificial, pumped-up flavors that babies come to prefer, while saving the food manufacturers and marketers millions of dollars by replacing fruits and vegetables with inexpensive fillers.



But what made babies and toddlers smile has had lasting consequences for you and for me, and for a whole generation. It has programmed us to feel deeply that extra sugar, extra starch, extra salt are what we need. It has programmed us to accept processed, diluted, nutritionally depleted foods.

Some prepared foods were already available without the additives. Beech-Nut hadn't used any added salt since 1977 or starch since 1986, and since 1991 had reserved sugar for baby-food desserts. Earth's Best organic baby food and Growing Healthy frozen baby food, both barely blips on the baby-food radar in those years, didn't use any of those ingredients at all. That's part of why we preferred Earth's Best for Austin.

At the time, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which publishes a valuable resource called the *Nutrition Action Health Letter*,

compared 3.5-ounce jars of Beech-Nut Banana (without fillers) with Gerber's best-selling baby food, Bananas With Tapioca (Gerber's name for their modified food starch). Beech-Nut provided 244 milligrams of potassium, versus only 145 milligrams in Gerber, 1.5 grams of fiber versus only 0.7 grams, 68.5 International Units (IU) of vitamin A versus only 20 IU in Gerber, 0.9 grams of protein versus 0.5 grams, and 0.29 milligrams of iron versus 0.1 milligrams.<sup>15</sup> Most American babies were getting about half as much nutrition per bite. And learning to love it.

What was called tapioca on the label, by the way, was not natural tapioca, but a starch modified with chemicals such as acetic anhydride, propylene oxide, epichlorohydrin, sodium trimetaphosphate, and adipic-acetic mixed anhydride. And what was often called "a small amount of sugar" on baby-food labels could be as much as four-and-a-half teaspoons in a six-ounce jar.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1996, shortly after the publicity in the *New York Times* and the pressure from the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Gerber announced that they would be removing all of these additives from most of their foods for the youngest babies.

But this book isn't about how to feed your child high-quality jarred baby food. It's about real kids eating real food in the real world. Using your creativity and making your own good choices—and helping your children make their own good choices—is a pleasure to be enjoyed and savored . . . a pleasure with the power to connect us to each other, as a human family, and to the earth, where we live and grow.

The good news is that there are excellent solutions for feeding our babies that fit the busy lives of twenty-first-century parents, and still set kids on a road to great real food and great health. *Feeding Baby Green* is a revolutionary new program designed to provide children the food that is good for them even before they are born, while teaching them to enjoy healthy amounts of wonderful foods throughout their lives. *Feeding Baby Green* is not intended to be a diet or program you follow for a few years, until your child goes away to college: it's a fun and healthy way of eating and living that lasts a lifetime—for you *and* your children, and your children's kids too!

Ready? Let's get started.

