

KEY

THE DAY MY LIFE CHANGED

It was a bright and sunny Saturday afternoon when events conspired against me to rearrange the rest of my life, in a manner that I could never have foreseen. My intention on that particular Saturday had in fact been to rearrange my life but I had planned to do it in a very different way.

What I had in mind was winning a lot of money so that I could leave my job and go and live somewhere warm and sunny. (9)**G**..... I did this almost every weekend and seldom won anything, but as they say, “you never know”.

While I was standing in the queue to buy my chance for a new life, I decided to get myself something nice for supper. (10)**D**..... Some tasty sandwiches would be just the thing with a cup of cocoa a little later on. I was acting on this impulse that proved to be my downfall.

That evening, while I was eagerly anticipating the results of the Lottery draw, I made myself the promised peanut butter sandwich and sat down in front of the television to relax. But very soon I realised that all was not well. Very strange things were happening to me. (11) ...**B**..... . Within minutes it had spread to the rest of my face, and my throat felt constricted. When I looked in the mirror I could see that my face had gone very red and a rash was spreading over my entire body.

Although I had no idea what was actually wrong with me, the link with the peanut butter sandwich was obvious. (12) ...**H**..... . I assumed that the jar I had bought was ‘off’, but when I checked the sell-by date, it was fixed for nine months ahead. So that wasn’t the problem. It had to be me.

I was beginning to feel a lot worse so I called a taxi to take me to the casualty department of the local hospital. After a battery of tests, I was called in to the consulting room. There I was given the diagnosis.

(13) ...**E**..... . The specialists explained to me that although to tell whether this was a mild or severe form of the allergy, I should assume that my condition was serious. They said that for the rest of my life I would have to carry a special syringe with me so that I could inject myself with adrenaline if I came into contact with peanuts by accident.

It was this information that changed my life and I look at everything I eat with great care. (14) ...**C**..... . I now diligently study labels on packets and jars for the warning ‘May contain traces of nuts’.

Sadly, many people who are free of the problem don’t take a nut allergy seriously. Even some of my friends see it as a bit of a joke, in spite of the problems it causes me in many different situations, some serious, some less so.

(15) ...**A**..... . But I have no desire to experience the symptoms of nut allergy again - so I shall have to accept the rearrangement of my everyday life as a permanent feature.

A 15 I feel embarrassed when I have to ask waiters if the food I am choosing from the menu is nut free, or remind a friend who has invited me to dinner that I am unable to eat nuts.

B 11 The first thing I became aware of was a tingling in my gums, and then my lips.

C 14 It’s surprising how popular an ingredient nuts actually are in many different types of food, and how careful people like me have to be with whatever they put in their mouths.

D 10 I looked around the shelves and on the spur of the moment decided to buy myself a jar of peanut butter

E 13 It seemed that I was one of a growing number of people with an allergy to peanuts.

F I tried to find information about it on the Internet, but found that most people are diagnosed early in life rather than as adults.

G 9 To this end, I walked to my local corner shop that morning to buy a ticket for the Lottery

H 12 I had eaten nothing else for hours, and there could be no other explanation for my symptoms.