

For most children it would be a welcome break during a hectic day of shopping, but for Josef Griffiths a visit to a high street coffee shop with his mother nearly cost him his life.

The nine-year-old boy, from Wembley, London, started suffer-

ing breathing problems within seconds of stepping inside the coffee bar on London's Oxford Street. As his face and throat swelled up, he began to lose consciousness.

If it had not been for the quick actions of his mother Louize and the heroics of a passing taxi driver

who raced the pair across town to a hospital, the youngster would probably have died from anaphylactic shock.

He is one of more than 200,000 children in the UK who suffer from peanut allergies. Just a tiny amount of a peanut is enough to

able to eat peanuts safely every day. By retraining his immune system, researchers have desensitized his body so it no longer reacts to peanuts.

We have gone from living with a paralysing fear every day to being able to live an almost normal life, explained Mrs Griffiths. The level of tension every day was unbearable. When he was at nursery I would stay in the café next door just in case.

The fear just took over our lives. Even a tiny bit of contamination could be dangerous to him. It is difficult to describe how frightening and terrifying it was to see him have an attack. He would swell up, start itching and stop breathing.

I feel like a huge weight has been lifted from us as we don't have to be watching everything he eats, everything he touches and

everyone he meets. It is a tremendous relief.

Josef's allergies first became apparent when he was just one year old. Neither his mother, who is 45, or his five-year-old brother Remi have any allergies. His father Andrew, 45, who is a sound recording engineer, suffers from asthma.

Josef's condition was so severe, however, he was made to eat in a separate room from his classmates at school in case his food became contaminated. He has suffered numerous attacks that have resulted in him being taken to hospital.

Mrs Griffiths said: For a mother, it is horrible to see all these people waddling frantically to save your little boy.

As he has got older, he has started to understand what is happening and that has made him more fearful too. It was really affecting the way he socialised and was preventing him from making friends.

We had to watch everything he did, even when relatives came round and went to give him a kiss, we had to ask if they had been eating anything with peanuts in it.

The problem is that peanuts are in so much now and lots of food is made in factories that handle peanuts.

Over a four-month period Josef was given steadily increasing amounts of peanut flour disguised in food by doctors at Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge, which slowly taught his immune system not to see the peanut protein as a threat.

Today his condition is so improved that he eats peanut butter on toast every day. He does, however, still suffer from milk allergy, but Mrs Griffiths now hopes that he will one day also be able to have similar treatment to overcome it too.

Mrs Griffiths added: I am just so grateful for what the doctors at Addenbrooke's have done. It is difficult to express just what a difference their amazing work has made to our lives.

Peanut allergy overcome by new treatment



Josef Griffiths: almost died from anaphylactic shock caused by molecules of peanut or milk in the air of a café

trigger a reaction. On this occasion, it was molecules of peanut or milk, which he is also allergic to, in the air of the café that caused the reaction.

But now, thanks to a remarkable experimental treatment being developed by doctors, Josef is

'Bendi Nobendi Bemi' from Iranga



Iranga Sachinthika Yaddhige's maiden effort, *Bendi Nobendi Bemi*, a book of poems, will be launched at the Ruhuna University Auditorium, Wellamadama, Matara, on July 25, at 4.30 pm.

Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Gemini Senanayake, and veteran lyricist, Rathna Sri Wijesinghe, who is the chief guest of the event, will deliver lectures at the launch.

Iranga is a doctor by the profession and an old girl of St. Mary's Convent, Matara, Visakha Vidyalaya Colombo 04, and Sujatha Vidyalaya Matara.

Mendis PCAOSL new president

K. B Annesley Mendis, an old boy of St Mary's College, Dehiwela, was unanimously elected as president of the Professional Counsellors Association, Sri Lanka, at its 4th Annual General Meeting held recently, at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo 7.

The present executive committee of the Association, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Mendis, has made arrangements to conduct a series of programmes including student counselling, family counselling, workplace counselling, youth counselling and workshops.

Therefore, the PCAOSL, has requested all Schools, Companies, Organizations, Associations, and people who need counselling to contact the Association.

For further details, contact K. B. Annesley Mendis, President, PCAOSL, No. 7/10/B, Cardinal Cooray Mawatha, Dickkowitz, Wattala. Tel. 072-8554675. Or Muditha Paranamana, Gen. Secretary, PCAOSL, Tel. 0777-878017.



K. B Annesley Mendis



LEG UP
It must be a dramatic scene! Jennifer Aniston gets serious – and shows off her great gams! – while exiting a cab Friday on the New York City set of *The Bounty*



BY THE NUMBERS
Hola, España! Denzel Washington lets his million-dollar smile do the talking at a press event for his film *The Taking of Pelham 123* in Madrid, Spain, on Friday



CUTTING IT CLOSE
Braving a bevy of eager fans, a stylish Rihanna debuts her razor-sharp new do – which features a buzzed-off look from side-to-side – after dining at Da Silvano restaurant in New York's West Village on Thursday.



DOLL FACE
Fergie gets all dolled up with a Barbie Clones tank top by Dimepiece during an afternoon out in Brentwood, Calif., on Thursday.



ON HER MARK
A beaming Eva Mendes offers a signing bonus to her appearance during a photo call Friday for the Giffoni Film Festival – the largest international youth film festival – in Salerno, Italy.



GREETING COMMITTEE
It's high-fives all around as Paris Hilton greets some young fans Thursday at Westfield Mall in Century City, Calif.