

**SAFE TO EAT!**

# MING'S LAW

TV chef **MING TSAI** helps pass a bill in Massachusetts to make dining out easier for people—like his son **DAVID**—who have potentially fatal food allergies

**W**hen his baby son was diagnosed with severe food allergies, it was "like an unfunny joke from upstairs," says chef Ming Tsai. "I had hoped to make David the dumplings my parents made me." Cooking at home meant no soy, nuts, wheat, dairy, eggs or shellfish, all of which could be deadly to David, now 8. Eating out was harder: "Nothing is more stressful than going to a restaurant and guessing what's in the food," says Tsai, 44, who with wife Polly has another son, Henry, 6.

But today, thanks in part to the host of public TV's *Simply Ming*,

David and others like him can dine out in Massachusetts with less worry. The state just passed the country's most comprehensive law requiring restaurants to educate staffs about allergies. "This is a giant step," says Anne Muñoz-Furlong, founder of the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. State senator Cynthia Creem, who sponsored the bill, credits Tsai with not only lobbying for four years, but for long setting an example. His Wellesley, Mass., restaurant Blue Ginger serves foods that

David can't eat but avoids cross-contamination in the kitchen. Tsai also keeps handy a list of the ingredients in every dish, so servers can easily answer the question "What's in that?" Under the new law, restaurants that keep such lists can be designated "Food Allergy Friendly" on a state Web site. But even now, Tsai tells parents of allergic kids to raise concerns with the chef—and that includes visitors to Blue Ginger: "No chef is too busy to talk to you about a child's life."

By Sharon Cotliar

"The law will help me and other kids and grown-ups with allergies," says David (with Dad at Blue Ginger).

