

SPOTLIGHT



Give Peas a Chance

Put away the canned food – SF's Peas of Mind has some healthy, ready-made meals for your little ones.

About six years ago, a bright, perky young woman named Jill Litwin was working in the snowboarding industry in Burlington, Vt., little suspecting that she'd soon be starting a company that offered healthy, tasty and convenient food for what she calls the "post-baby" age group (approximately one to five). According to Litwin, such a product was practically unheard of at that time. "It was like there was baby food, and food for everybody else," she recalls, "so parents were left to cut up hot dogs and feed their kids Cheerios, Goldfish and that stuff."

The turning point came when a co-worker confessed to Litwin her guilt over her daily habit of feeding her three-year-old son canned green beans, and Litwin offered to prepare healthier meals for the child. Each week, she made a different meal containing nutrients from all four food groups, then froze the dish and gave it to her friend for reheating.

Word of Litwin's culinary talents began to spread, and she soon found herself cooking for a huge group of people. Realizing she had a business on her hands, she moved to San Francisco to launch Peas of Mind. The company originally offered four different "Puffets" (Litwin's invented word for her frozen meals): Nanna's Banana, Eat Your Greens, Black Bean Polenta and Carrot Risotto. All of these Puffets are available in select Bay

Area stores and contain organic whole milk (important for growth and bone development), eggs (for protein and Omega-3s), organic fruit, veggies or beans, and a grain. Three of these four Puffets are also gluten-free. Peas of Mind recently created two dairy-free flavors, tentatively scheduled to hit the stores within the next month: Mamma's Pasta Puffet and Dalal Lentil Puffet, the latter of which contains non-GMO, organic tofu. The company also plans to come up with some tasty side dishes and snacks.

As for the origin of the word Puffet, Litwin is just as stumped as anyone else. "It just came out of thin air, like 'Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,'" she laughs. "Well, we say 'Get off your tuffet and eat a Puffet.'"

Peas of Mind products are currently available at Whole Foods Markets in Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos and Palo Alto, and many other stores. For your nearest stockists, go to www.peasofmind.com.