

RIBONUCLEOTIDE STORIES

These 37 reports of reactions to Food Additive 635 in more than 50 people have previously been made public by the Food Intolerance Network (www.fedup.com.au) from 2000-2005.

[037] 635: Minutes away from death: life-threatening swelling of lips and tongue from 635 (April 2000)

I have a story regarding flavour enhancer 635 from the eight-year old boy next door.

Last year he ate a pie bought from a bakery shop near his mother's workplace. Not only did he get the skin reaction he also suffered a life-threatening anaphylactic-type reaction with swelling of mouth, tongue and throat. The doctor (fortunately a doctor's surgery was just around the corner) who treated him said that he was probably a matter of minutes away from death. He remained on antihistamines for weeks and missed a lot of school. For days his lips protruded four inches or so! The family was unable to find out what was in the pie and so the cause of the reaction remained a mystery.

A little over a month ago this child was given two or three CC's by a friend at school. Within a short time his arms were itching and his chest was covered in red and white wheals. This reaction was not as severe as the pie incident (the dose was no doubt much lower). I think that reaction took a week to subside.

His mother has commented that this boy has had no problems of this kind until last year, although he does have a history of mild asthma.

It wasn't until I was looking through your web site that I found the more-than-likely culprit. The family is very grateful. Once again THANK YOU! Surely 635 cannot go on being legal - if it was a drug it would be taken off the market or used, if deemed necessary, with extreme caution under hospital conditions, I'm sure! - *Alison Cliff, Qld*

[117] 635: Irregular pulse and atrial fibrillation (August 2001)

I react to MSG, flavour enhancer 635, metabisulphite preservatives, and yellow colour in cordial. I also have food intolerance to salicylates. From MSG, 635 flavour enhancer and metabisulphite preservatives I get very irregular pulse and atrial fibrillation. The atrial fibrillation settles down after 12-20 hrs depending on how much offending additive I have eaten (in a restaurant it is difficult to tell) - and my pulse settles down faster if I drink lots of water every hour to flush the toxins out of my system. I've learned to read the labels and carry a reminder in my purse of the numbers to which I react when shopping. I have learned which brands or types of foods are a problem and steer clear of those. - *Mary A Biddulph, retired nurse, Brisbane*

[162] 635: "I'm 56 and another victim of 635" (June 2002)

Congratulations on an excellent site, I wish I'd found it a few months ago when I was scratching myself until I was bleeding from the worst rash I have ever had. Just in case some people think that food additives only affect children, I'm 56 and another victim of 635. I believe that packet soup was what triggered the rash, then things like BBQ chicken from Woolies, pizza and even KFC, although I can't prove that it contains 635 (but I bet it does).

I must admit the one food I miss has been my cup of hearty soup. I'd have it by itself or use it in casseroles. I can't find a stock cube or stock powder that doesn't have 635 in it.

The most amazing thing is that neither my allergist nor my dermatologist had heard of 635. The rash just faded away when I stopped eating 635. I could have saved the \$1000 that I spent at the specialists. My allergy specialist says I can now safely eat those foods again because the rash has gone but I won't be charging into a 635 diet to see if it comes back. Nine months of hell was long enough for me. - *by email*

[246] 635: itch was unbearable (April 2003)

A couple of days after initially eating a meal my partner and I made using a recipe mix containing flavour enhancer 635, I broke out in a rash over my neck and upper torso. This quickly spread to the rest of my body the following day. The itch is unbearable, especially around my neck area, arms and breasts. The doctor didn't seem to believe that it could have been this enhancer, even after I showed her an article published in the Melbourne Sunday Herald Sun on 9 March 2003 entitled "Allergy hell in food additive".

It looks to me that there are many people who are intolerant to this additive and I believe it should be banned. This is the first time I have ever had a rash of this magnitude develop and I am not impressed. - *reader, by email*

[247] 635: Ten week rash from 635 (April 2003)

I have never suffered any kind of food allergy in my life (43 years) and then about ten weeks ago I found myself suffering from an extremely intense and constant itch of my hands and arms. After two days of this I found I had come out in hives, starting on my upper chest, abdomen and back. It then spread to my arms and my legs and from then on each day might be different combinations of location of the hives, but always somewhere. They were worse at night causing intense itch and lack of sleep, I can't begin to tell you how unbearable the itch was and how it affected my everyday living and my ability to work. On several occasions my lips have been swollen and I find on occasion that although my upper lip doesn't look particularly swollen, it feels 'thick' and like I have been to the dentist. Once my eyelids puffed up too. Through studying the foods that I had eaten I became almost 100% certain that it was 635 causing my problem. For almost two weeks I avoided all foods containing this additive and was finally able to come off the antihistamines I had been forced to live on. I then ate a seasoned lamb steak bought from my local butcher and the next night the hives were back. Guess what? On contacting the butcher concerned, he was able to tell me that the seasoning used on those steaks contained 635.

I wish this product had never been put on the market. I'm sure it is what, to put it frankly, has caused me absolute hell almost continuously for over two months - *Debbie, by email*

[252] 635: So many numbers and long words (April 2003)

I bought a basted turkey roll which we'd never had before, and cooked it in the foil according to the manufacturers instructions. Near the end of the cooking time, I checked it and got some of the baste on my fingers. I gave my finger a lick after I put the turkey back in the oven. Within 10 - 15 minutes I had two hives on my right foot. I thought something must have bitten me. It wasn't until I started to eat the meal (I didn't even get all the way through it) that I realised they weren't bites. Within 15 minutes I had hives all over my body, my temperature was raised and I was very itchy.

I took Claratyne. The hives didn't get worse but they didn't go away. I saw the doctor the next day. He prescribed cortisone cream. I slathered my body with it every day but it took over a week for the hives to go away. At the time, I looked at the ingredients list on the turkey packaging but there were so many numbers and long words that I thought the culprit could have been anything. - *by email*

[253] 635: No one has been able to help me (April 2003)

For the past 2 years and 4 months I have suffered unbelievably with the most horrific itchy rash and skin problems. I rated my rash as being chronic. It has been the most excruciating thing that I have ever experienced in my 65 years of life. I have been to so many doctors that I have lost count of them. Sadly no one has been able to help me, not even one of Adelaide's leading dermatologists.

Through the Current Affair program I have been able to work out that it is the additive 635 that has been my problem all this time.

The pictures you have on your web site are exactly what I was like, plus on the days that I had really bad reactions - which was nearly every day - my whole face was puffy with fluid, burning hot and extremely itchy, with prickling sensations and constant flaking skin, just like dandruff. I also suffered very swollen lips and badly swollen eyes with sacks of fluid under my eyes for a couple of days each time this occurred. My whole body was so inflamed that my skin was a constant clammy state 24 hours a day.

My hands have been extremely sore with splits all over them and like a fungus growth under all my finger nails, all of my fingers have had big gaping splits on them, some days it has been almost impossible to work because they have been so painful, my skin just seemed to split apart at any time.

At times it has been unbearable. It has cost me thousands of dollars in medical bills, lotions, tablets and bandages over the past two years plus.

I had no idea at all that it could be something that I have eaten all my life. As I do not eat a lot of red meat, chicken is my main meat source. Sometimes I would have it for two meals a day. Not for one moment did I ever think that it could be the chicken that I was eating that was causing such a serious rash.

I always purchased my cooked chickens from the same shop, so I asked them what they put on their chickens before they are cooked. They handed me a can of the product and there it was: 635. For the past nine days I have not eaten any chicken at all and the rash has disappeared completely. Although I am still having some itchy sensations during the day, I am happy to say that I have had two full nights sleep for the first time in over two years.

How can customers know that this dreadful product is being used on rotisserie chickens when there are no signs displayed in the shops stating that it has been used or no warning on the foil bags that they are put in when purchased?

I just hope that this can be brought out in the open for everyone to be aware of. I am certainly spreading the word to all that I meet, especially everyone who has seen me go through the past 28 months of agony. They are stunned. Everyone asks, 'how can the government possibly allow things like this to be used???'- *Yvette Holdsworth, Adelaide.*

[254] 635: No one could give me an answer (April 2003)

I'm 50 years old. Although an eczema sufferer most of my early life, in the past 12 months I have on different occasions developed a rash worse than anything I have ever experienced with eczema.

I have been to dermatologists and allergists and found that I was severely allergic to the dust mite. In the past couple of months I changed all my bedding etc and have been free of rash.

On Saturday night I cooked apricot chicken. The welts on my body started to appear again on Sunday night. I finished the chicken for dinner on Monday evening not associating it with the rash. Last night I woke tearing my body to pieces. There were huge welts all over my torso, arms and upper legs. I was in a terrible state. It was two in the morning and I was sitting in my

lounge room sobbing and distressed. I thought I had found the problem with the dust mite. This was however was something far worse.

I went into the kitchen and checked what I had eaten. I had read the article previously on food enhancer 635. I checked the Continental French onion soup packet that I had used in the casserole. There was no mention of 635. I was totally distressed and at my wit's end. I went back to the soup packet and checked again and saw 'flavour enhancer (ribonucleotides)'. I had kept the article on 635. I rushed to my purse and took out the article. There was the chemical name for 635 - the same as on the soup packet.

At least I now feel a little relieved to know what has been causing these periodic chronic outbursts of welts. I can try and avoid these foods.

The allergist I went to only a couple of months ago knew nothing of 635 until I told him of the article in The Herald Sun. He had tested me for everything else but not for 635. I am astounded that they are unaware of this problem. I have been going to doctors for the past 18 months, whenever I flared up. No-one could give me an answer.

This is nothing short of criminal that the Food and Health departments will not ban this additive. To tear yourself to pieces, with huge welts on your body is the most demoralising thing I have ever experienced. Obviously this had caused problems for me previously and had gone undetected. Not only do I now have to wait for the welts to die down, I have scratched up my skin so badly it will take weeks for that to heal. Surely big business should not come first over the health and well being of Australians. - *Sue, Vic*

[255] 635: 635 ruined my last days in Australia (April 2003)

I am a Canadian resident visiting Melbourne and writing to you because I believe I must have this reaction to flavour 635. A week ago I got a nasty itch on the side of my breast and by the next morning I awoke with it having spread and by the next day it had covered my chest, back and now my neck, ears, face and it is slowly making its way to my arms and legs. At first I thought it was the new laundry detergent, so I change it and rewashed everything I brought to Australia with me. It seemed to be slowing down until this morning when I awoke with far more on my face as the older ones got bigger and drier.

My boyfriend saw the bit on TV about 635 and realised it was in the instant noodles we ate just last night. This means I've got it all over again for another two weeks. I cannot believe this. I have never had anything like it except chicken pox! Now I'm sad because I am leaving in two weeks and not going to see my boyfriend for many months and I have to end my stay looking like a leper and feeling like I fell in a bag of fleas.

It makes me just as angry as the other people I've heard on this site because something like this should be immediately taken off the market. It hurts people, how can that allowed???? Good luck to all others out there with the itchy and scratchy syndrome ... - *Claire, Canada*

[256] 635: 'He said food additives do not cause a long-lasting reaction like this ...' (April 2003)

My daughter is nearly two. Ten days ago, she woke with a rash all over her torso. By that evening it had spread all over her body, including face, hands and feet, and she had developed a fever. At the local hospital, the doctor advised us she had a virus and it was not contagious. He suggested we give her Panadol four hourly to reduce her temperature and give Claratyne for the itch. During the next five days we gave her Claratyne but it did nothing to stop the itch. Her temperature remained up and we eventually gave up on the Panadol. We noticed that the rash seemed to improve during the day but flare up again in the evenings in certain trouble spots such as her back and around her nappy.

On day 5, after her evening bath, she went berserk when we tried to dress her. She was scratching madly and screaming non-stop – it took two of us to hold her down and get a nappy on her. After an hour of distress, she fell asleep but had a terrible night. She moaned in her sleep, and woke at 2.30am and screamed for half an hour, trying to pull her clothes and nappy off.

The next morning I took her to our GP. He was perplexed. He was trying to find some sign of infection to explain why her temperature was still up. He advised we switch to using Phenergan to try to control the itch. I gave her three doses of Phenergan that day, and yet the itching continued. That evening we had a repeat of the screaming and scratching frenzy. We ended up calling an ambulance. By the time the paramedics arrived, Freya had stopped screaming and was quiet. One paramedic raised the issue of this possibly being an allergic reaction but was wondering if it was something to do with clothes detergent. The hospital staff had nothing more to offer.

The following morning we took Freya to see an allergy specialist. He advised us the rash was urticaria, and his belief was that she did initially have a virus and her body had an allergic reaction in response. He advised it could take up to two weeks for the rash to clear up completely. He said the only other explanation would be a food allergy, and that if there was no improvement over the weekend we should make changes to her diet.

On the weekend I saw the Herald-Sun article. When I mentioned it to the allergy specialist, but he discounted flavour enhancer 635 as a possible cause for Freya's reaction!!! He said food additives do not produce a long lasting reaction like this ... Well, I am not taking any chances. Now aware that 635 can cause the exact symptoms I have seen my daughter suffer during the past few days, I have reflected on her diet. The day before Freya's rash first appeared, she ate something she had never eaten before: flavoured chips. - *Tara, Melbourne*

[257] 635: One day someone will die (April 2003)

My 21 year old daughter came down with an allergic reaction on Christmas Day. She went to the doctor the next morning with this awful raised red rash all over her. He said 'it's only a reaction' and sent us home with over-the-counter antihistamine. As we were leaving she passed out but the doctor said it was only a faint. That night we had to take her to emergency at the hospital where they didn't know what it was either. She ended up staying in for 3 days and was on cortisone injections. She went to an allergy specialist who said it was a virus and did nothing. The hospital ruled out virus as they did all the tests. Thank you for your work. My daughter did eat turkey for Christmas dinner but I would never have dreamed it would be something in the turkey. It was so stressful not knowing what the cause was.

I would like to see something done as one day someone will die. I certainly wouldn't want my daughter to go through that again. - *Charmaine, Qld*

[258] 635: Afraid for my safety (April 2003)

I began to suffer strange, itchy swellings about seven years ago and spent a lot of time and money going back and forth to my doctor to try to ascertain the cause and a treatment. As you guessed, he couldn't find a cause. I gave up asking and had to suffer in silence. I have consulted doctors only when the swelling occurred in my tongue and throat to such a degree that I was very afraid for my safety. These swellings have probably occurred on a two-monthly basis for several years, with some incidences being more extreme than others.

Since the article appeared in the Melbourne Sunday Herald Sun about 635, I have tried to be very careful about what I eat, and check, where I am able, that any foods I consume do not contain 635. I have noticed a reduction in occurrences, although one morning I woke up looking like Eddie Murphy in the Nutty Professor.

It was interesting to read that rotisserie chicken can be a culprit, as this is one thing I have eaten recently, before suffering an occurrence which I could not explain otherwise.

Thanks for getting the information out there. You may just save some precious lives. - *Cathy, Vic*

[259] 635: Call an ambulance (April 2003)

I am a 33 year old mother of two. I woke up one Sunday morning with an angry red blotchy rash all over my body and my legs were burning. I asked my husband to call an ambulance as I nearly fainted and felt like vomiting at the same time. A doctor put me on Prednisolone tablets for a week. I also took antihistamines and smothered myself in Calamine lotion but nothing seemed to ease the rash which turned to severe hives all over my body. I couldn't sleep and would be awake in the night clawing at my skin for some relief. I ended up bathing in Pinetarsol Solution which eased the itching. I was told that looking for the cause of the reaction was like "looking for a needle in a haystack" and I could not think of anything I had done differently. So to see your story on A Current Affair was fantastic. I am sure my reaction was from eating Continental Oriental Fried Rice packet mix on Friday night and also Saturday night for tea. I had a slight rash on my stomach on Saturday afternoon but it wasn't until Sunday morning that the severe reaction occurred. I checked my cupboards and 635 was also in Continental Macaroni Cheese as well. Thank you, and let's hope it can be removed from foods before someone has a fatal reaction.

[273] 635: 'At death's door' (June 2003)

I am 58 years old and came across your website by accident. I was dumbfounded when I saw the pictures of the effects of food additives 635. This was what I had for nearly 3 years!

I could not believe it. My symptoms too started in the early hours of the morning with dreadful itching. By the time I got up my thighs were black and bruised from scratching. Over time this went and welts came all over my body. I looked like I had been beaten. I also had rashes that were itchy and painful. The only part that was not affected was my face and head.

So many doctors and tests, so many creams and tablets - and nothing would stop it. I had tests that showed I was allergic to things I had never had, like horsehair and oysters. To top it off I started to get fungal infections in my fingernails. I had bouts of crying and wanted to die.

Eventually I was told it could be emotional or change of life. Then in June 2002 I started have rigors (uncontrollable shaking). I ended up in hospital, where I had every test under the sun including biopsies. My body was swelling up and I had blood tests every couple of hours. My temperature would not come down. I was seen by the elite of dermatologists and a professor of infectious diseases who told me that 'sometimes the body will not reveal its secrets'. They called what I had 'hypersensitive vasculitis' or a toxic shock from an unknown source. They said that I was at death's door. Then my temperature went down and I was discharged.

It never occurred to me that it could be the food I was eating, as I hadn't changed anything. I would have meat pies or sausage rolls at least once a week and sometimes pizza. Eventually I cut out processed foods and now make my own sausages rolls. I still do not know which one started off this torment but I have thrown out everything in my pantry with 635/621 and my symptoms have gone away.

At the very least, these food additives should be listed in bold lettering or a different colour. - *Maree, by email*

[274] 635: 'This damn additive' (June 2003)

Thank you for bringing this horrible food additive 635 to the attention of the media. Until the program on ACA, I had no idea that other people were suffering like me.

My problems started in July 2002, when I ate roast chicken that caused a dramatic rash to appear all over my body. I was sure the roast chicken was the cause as I had noticed on two previous occasions severe thirst and disorientation after consuming roast chicken bought from a Woolworths supermarket. On the third occasion I had the same symptoms plus the rash. The rash was so severe that I needed oral cortisone. Woolworths informed me that 635 was the sole flavour enhancer in the chicken. I saw an allergist about a month later who dismissed my view, saying that it was more likely to be a non-specific reaction that would eventually die down and disappear.

I didn't subscribe to that diagnosis and decided to stay away from roast chicken for my health's sake. I began to notice that it was affected by other commercially produced foods, including a salad dressing that contained 631. The rash usually starts on my upper thighs around my backside and travels down my legs. It also appears on my back and shoulders. At its worst when it first appeared it was also on my face and torso. The welts were large, covering a wide area, very hot and maddeningly itchy.

The most disturbing aspect of this situation is that 635 is being used in takeaway foods and restaurants. The consumer has no way of knowing that 635 is present in the food. I am beginning to avoid all commercially prepared food. Can you believe it? Imagine if I became anaphylactic to this substance. I recently attended a wedding reception and cautiously ate the three-course meal provided, avoiding the gravy on the meat, only to find the rash reappearing by the time I got home. Another disturbing symptom that has only accompanied the rash twice (the second time was early last Sunday morning after the reception) is a very strong feeling of 'knotting' in my oesophagus. It is similar to the feeling of eating a lot of food too quickly and having to wait for it to travel down. It comes in waves, like contractions, and I wonder whether it is the peristalsis of my oesophagus firing unnecessarily. It has woken me from sleep on both occasions and I find that it responds to taking an antihistamine.

I now religiously read the ingredients provided on packaged foods and have stopped eating Asian and Indian takeaway and takeaway pizza - *Anna, NSW, 35 years of age.*

[283] 635: Ribo rash from unlisted ingredients in old packaging (September 2003)

My recent attack of ribo rash lead me to your web site. A casserole in which Dad nearly poisoned me with two beef Massel stock cubes and turned me psycho and swollen led me to Safeway. I was furious that the old package from which Dad's cubes came did not list 631 and 627 as they do on the new packaging. - *reader, Melbourne*

[303] 635: Ribo rash from Meals on Wheels - an open letter (December 2003)

Six months ago, I was rushed off to hospital after waking in the middle of the night feeling edgy and hot with swelling of my face, heart palpitations and welts or hives all over my body. Afterwards, I questioned was it something I ate - the wine, the peanuts?

These awful experiences went on for a period of about four months until my brother saw a segment on A Current Affair about reactions to flavour enhancer 635 (also 627 and 631, ribonucleotides). I had missed the show but immediately got onto the website and as soon as I started reading I knew that was exactly what I had. This information is provided by Sue Dengate at <http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info> on the factsheet called 'Ribo Rash'.

I read everything I purchase, I do not eat anything if I do not know exactly what is in it, before I go to a function I speak with the chef or caterers. When dining I choose a meal and then request that the chef can assure me that there is no 635 added. I went through my pantry and discarded any foods with 635 in the ingredients and have not had a reaction of any kind for about two months which is a wonderful breakthrough for me, after experiencing reactions 3-4 times a week.

I request that you please take the time to read the attached information, as my parents are both experiencing similar reactions. My stepfather has a chronic rash and my mother gets hives at least one night a week. They receive 'Meals on Wheels' and my stepfather says it is usually after rissoles, stew or soup. Therefore I request that you read the ingredients that you are adding for flavour to these meals. Purchased chickens from Woolworths have the additive in the stuffing, Coles marinated fresh chickens contain 635, Red Rooster have in on the outside, even some chicken salt has it as well as some stocks, tinned and packet sauces and soups. Potato chips, CC's and other flavour enhanced foods are all to be avoided but there are plenty of substitutes, it just means being more vigilant as to what is served.

The elderly in aged care facilities and even patients in hospitals are experiencing these reactions due to flavour enhancer 635. There are plenty of natural herbs and spices that can be added to food for flavour. A lot of suffering and possibly even death is being caused by this additive.

Thanking you. Mrs E. M. R. Lloyd, Frenchville. Q4701, Ph. 49 289094

[321] 635: Life-threatening reaction to flavoured chips (April 2004)

I believe I had a very real dangerous reaction last year to chips whilst I was in early stages of pregnancy. I was admitted to emergency and due to difficulty breathing a nurse had to stay in with me. They asked me had I taken any unusual drugs etc and were baffled when the only different thing I had eaten was flavoured chips. I even took the packet with me, the reaction started almost immediately. Previously I had only ever eaten plain, but due to a craving I got a flavoured variety. I thought I was going to die. By the time I got to hospital (luckily it wasn't far from home) my mouth and throat was so swollen I couldn't talk or breath properly, of course because of this I was treated as high priority and treated straight away. Thank God I had realised straight away when I got a tingling burning sensation and felt like I had been to the dentist and had a local anaesthetic. My mother had said something about these chemicals recently in our diets (I had actually dismissed this at the time) but thank goodness she did. I think I am lucky to still be here. - *reader, SA.*

[322] 635: Rash was caused by 2 minute noodles (April 2004)

Well it hasn't even been a week yet and I'm feeling better, my rash has cured 80% best ever, the main problem was Maggi 2 minute noodles as I have been eating them at least once a week since I left home (I guess mother's cooking says a lot there) just because they were quick and easy.- *from the failsafe groups.*

[336] 635: from school tuckshop (July 2004)

Last year one of my children had a cottage pie from the school tuckshop and when she arrived home she complained of a headache, stomach cramps and had a skin rash. The next day I read the ingredients of the cottage pies in the tuckshop. They contained preservative, MSG and flavour enhancer 635. When I read about 635 on your web site I was stunned that a tuckshop would give this stuff to children, and I realized what had caused a rash on my other daughter. After eating some cooked chicken from a supermarket, she had developed an itchy red rash which covered her whole body and I had to give her an antihistamine tablet. At the time I couldn't work out what had caused the rash. Another time she got a rash after eating some cooked chicken from the local small food store. I went to the shop to read the ingredients and sure enough the seasoning contained 635. I printed out the information from your website and gave it to the owner of the shop. They have not changed the seasoning and we have never again bought a cooked chicken from any store. - *reader, Qld*

[339] 635: Meals on wheels disease (Sept 2004)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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The elderly in aged care facilities and even patients in hospitals are experiencing these reactions due to flavour enhancer 635. There are plenty of natural herbs and spices that can be added to food for flavour instead of an additive which is causing a lot of suffering and possibly even death - *letter from Queensland*.

[356] One-liners (Nov 2004)

My dreadful rash has almost cleared up as long as I avoid 'the 600 numbers' [flavour enhancers 621, 627, 631 and 635] - I have found that one of the worst things if I happen to be dining out is soup. - SA

[365] 635: Swollen, blistered and bleeding lips from ribonucleotides (635) (March 2005)

The symptom first appeared when I had taken my eight year old son to KFC. There was chicken salt on the chips. 48 hours later, he had woken with extremely swollen lips, they had peeled, split and were bleeding. He had obviously been bleeding in his sleep as well. I freaked at the thought of what could have happened that night.

After the process of "what did we have in the past couple of day", I narrowed it down to the chicken salt. I warned my family, close friends and even my neighbours of what I believed to be an allergic reaction and purchased the Food Additives booklet from a health food store.

I came across this problem again with Kraft BBQ shapes, we used to eat these all time as a snack instead of lollies etc. I don't know whether or not they have changed their contents but we now can't eat them. His reaction time was again 48 hours.

However, the next time it happened, his reaction time had reduced to 1 - 2 hours. He was at a neighbour's son's birthday party, and I warned the mother of my son's possible allergic reaction. The party lasted for roughly 2 hours. When my son came home, I could see his lips growing as he walked towards me. They were blistering on the inside and bleeding. I immediately asked the mother what she had at the party and found that the cheese sticks she had given them had 635 in it. I immediately gave him some Polaramine Syrup and his

Seretide Puffer and drove him straight to the doctors, amazingly the polaramine had seemed to somewhat control the reaction.

The doctor could see his reaction. His fingers also started to pimple and blister. It was then that I was given a referral to a paediatrician. The doctor was also concerned that my son might be suffering from Stevens Johnson Syndrome [a severe adverse skin reaction to drugs].

By this time my head is spinning. I believe that I could lose my son at the drop of a hat due to the powers that be allowing these chemicals into our foods. – *by email*

[368] One liners (March 2005)

Regarding flavour enhancer 635, I have had three reactions to this substance, it is in Lays Flamin' Hot Chips and Flamin' Hot Munchies, it caused me within minutes to break out in a rash on my face, neck, and anywhere else I had touched on my body. It went away the next day but really scared me this time. – *by email*

[380] 635: Lasted two weeks and was agony (November 2005)

Recently I suffered an extremely itchy rash that kept me up at night and became very inflamed and sore from scratching. I consulted the doctor and all he could tell me was that it was a rash, and it could be a virus. That was all he could tell me. That and he asked if I'd ever had chicken pox ... this rash was nothing like a chicken pox rash. The rash itself lasted two weeks and was agony, to say the least. I still bear marks on my arms from scratching. I went through the usual what did you eat routine and nothing out of the ordinary - although I did have Hungry Jack's in the 30 hour time frame.

(Later) As I tend to avoid most overprocessed foods, I can honestly say that my rash after 3 weeks is much better. The rash I developed was small, intensely itchy bumps over my stomach and back, and my arms. These bumps were constantly itchy, antihistamines helped but did not alleviate much. I couldn't sleep and felt irritable although that had a lot to do with no sleep. However I still have some marks on my arms where I scratched too hard - reader by email.

[382] 635: Irritable bowel symptoms (December 2005)

A few weeks ago I started having a Continental Low Carb instant soup every day. I knew the 635 was in there, but thought I didn't react to it. BIG mistake. No doubt you're expecting a description of the rash and swelling. Yes, I did get those, but not until week 2.

In week 1 my stomach progressively got sicker and sicker. By the end of the week I could only lie on the lounge and visit the loo. The doctor diagnosed mild food poisoning that turned into a very nasty stomach bug. Antibiotics and no food for three days cleared the bug. So what did I do? I had a miso soup from a local Japanese restaurant. A few hours later my stomach started going odd again and I began to itch. By that night the typical 635 rash and unbearable itch had set in. For some bizarre reason I didn't think of 635 with the miso. The next day I had one of those damn instant soups again and of course the same thing happened but worse.

Needless to say I have ditched the soup and banned 635. My son is actually quite pleased because one of the things that make him itch makes Mummy itch, so he feels a little less alone about it. The itch and rash have gone, but my lips are still very dry and cracked. But I have LEARNT MY LESSON! – Megan NSW.

[420] 635: "A maddening itch" (September 2002)

In response to the articles I have seen on your website, I am 99% sure that my 30-year-old husband has a nasty reaction to 635. He had been complaining of a maddening itch at night

on occasion, like he was shedding skin, and it was almost impossible for him to sleep. The last time it happened he had eaten Maggi 2-minute noodles earlier in the day. It was serendipity that a few days earlier I had been researching food additives in relation to migraines and found mention of the dreaded 635 and then thought to check the labels on everything he had eaten. We now consciously avoid anything containing 635, and to date he has been itch free. - *Rhonda, by email*

[421] 635: "I'm 56 and another victim of 635" (September 2002)

"Congratulations on an excellent website, I wish I'd found it a few months ago when I was scratching myself until I was bleeding from the worst rash I have ever had. Just in case some people think that food additives only affect children, I'm 56 and another victim of 635.

"I believe that packet soup was what triggered the rash, then things like BBQ chicken from Woolies, pizza and even KFC, although I can't prove that it contains 635 (but I bet it does) ... The most amazing thing is that neither my allergist nor my dermatologist had heard of 635. I could have saved the \$1000 that I spent at the specialists. My allergy specialist says I can now safely eat those foods again because the rash has gone but I won't be charging into a 635 diet to see if it comes back. Nine months of hell was long enough for me." - *by email*.

[422] 635: "just a few CC's" (September 2002)

"I ate just a few CC's at a staff function. Within an hour I had a red rash and itch like that from a caterpillar inside my right elbow. By the time I went to bed I was scratching myself all over the armpit and upper body. Having a shower really made it go, across my chest and up my neck on the right. The next morning at an aerobics class I had a red rash over my entire right body from the waist up to my neck, where it formed an unsightly and extremely itchy vivid red high-water mark around my neck.- *by email*.

"Three days later I still have lumps and itches in my right armpit and up to my face. I seem to have become hyper-sensitised to other allergens that rarely affect me, sneezing, scratching and itching. If I hadn't seen this all happen to my son I wouldn't believe that it was caused by such a small amount of an additive. And I know that it will last a week, based on his experience."

[423] 635: "life-threatening anaphylactic-type reaction" (September 2002)

"I have a story regarding flavour enhancer 635 from the eight-year old boy next door.

"Last year he ate a pie bought from a bakery shop near his mother's workplace. Not only did he get the skin reaction he also suffered a life-threatening anaphylactic-type reaction with swelling of mouth, tongue and throat. The doctor (fortunately a doctor's surgery was just around the corner) who treated him said that he was probably a matter of minutes away from death. He remained on antihistamines for weeks and missed a lot of school. For days his lips protruded four inches or so! The family was unable to find out what was in the pie and so the cause of the reaction remained a mystery.

"A little over a month ago this child was given two or three CC's by a friend at school. Within a short time his arms were itching and his chest was covered in red and white wheals. This reaction was not as severe as the pie incident (the dose was no doubt much lower). I think that reaction took a week to subside.

"His mother has commented that this boy has had no problems of this kind until last year, although he does have a history of mild asthma.

"It wasn't until I was looking through your web site that I found the more-than-likely culprit. The family is very grateful. Once again

"THANK YOU! Surely 635 cannot go on being legal - if it was a drug it would be taken off the market or used, if deemed necessary, with extreme caution under hospital conditions, I'm sure!

[424] 635: One-liners (September 2002)

Soon after its introduction an NT pediatrician asked us which ingredient in Maggi two minute noodles could cause 'a dramatic skin eruption' in a four year old boy

nearly 6 year old girl from NT developed an intensely itchy skin rash 24 hours after a class party with party pies, pediatrician at hospital prescribed Phenergan, 3 others in class with milder rashes

55 year old woman from SA, developed a dramatic rash that lasted two weeks after eating Gibbs party pies, antihistamines were not very effective

13 yo boy from NT developed an intensely itchy skin rash from the soles of his feet to the top of his head after eating a pie at a friend's place, the contents of the pie could not be determined

11 yo boy from NT developed an intensely itchy skin rash from 30 hours after eating party pies at a class party, the rash spread from chest to feet, then from chest to top of head, reappearing for 10 days. Missed one week of school. One other in class with milder rash.

2 yo girl from Victoria, developed a dramatic all-over itchy skin rash after eating Maggi instant noodles for dinner. Rushed to emergency room at midnight, needed antihistamines for two weeks. The family's regular brand of noodles (all the same ingredients except for 635) do not affect her.

50ish woman from NT, developed a mild but persistent skin rash after changing brand of frozen pie eaten once a week. New brand contains 635.

40ish man from Qld, developed constant itchy rash over the last two years, eats CC's corn chips (containing 635) every day

50ish man from NT developed a dramatic itchy rash within hours of eating "a few" CCs corn chips.

A pregnant woman in the NT who developed all-over itching was told it was due to pregnancy. Sure enough, after the birth, the itching stopped. When the baby was four months old, the woman watched a grand final on TV with a plate of party pies to hand - the first time she'd eaten them since having the baby, although she had eaten them constantly during the pregnancy. The next day the itching started again.

8 yo boy from NT, ate one packet of Lays Country Style Sour cream and Onion chips on Easter Saturday (wanting the Pokemon card inside). The next day he ate another half a packet and developed a "head to toe itchy rash like a map of Australia, huge and bumpy" according to pharmacy assistant. Eyelids started to swell. He presented to a pharmacy with the chip packets and his parents saying, "we think it was these". Contents included 635.

[425] 635: "face very swollen and lumpy" (September 2002)

"I woke up at 3.30am on a Sunday covered with a rash, particularly bad on arms and torso. My face was very swollen and lumpy. The rash was terrible, the facial swelling was quite frightening and I felt as though I was gasping for air at times. My doctor said because it was all over my body, it was likely something I had eaten. The only thing different I had was a vegie burger from Hungry Jacks that I ate shortly before going to sleep. I went back later and

asked about the ingredients. The only thing that I was not sure that I had eaten before was additive 635 (it was the only additive). I've never experienced a reaction like this. In the past, when I have had allergic reactions, the result has been hives, not rash, and always cured quickly by an antihistamine tablet. This time I had to take a course of antihistamines and steroids. I assure you I won't be consuming this 635 again. It has been a most distressing experience for me and caused me to cancel my holiday. It is almost incomprehensible that this additive is allowed (without any sort of warning) if this sort of reaction can occur." (Brisbane)

[426] 635: "chicken flavouring" (September 2002)

"My 16yr old son had a bout of hives last year. Covered his arms, legs and body in large swollen itchy welts. Telfast 180mg stopped the itching and reduced the swelling, but we could still see the red welts. For almost a week he woke each morning with the welts raised and itching again. We couldn't identify anything different in his diet or environment. Two weeks later he had another outbreak, similar in intensity. But this time I realised that both times it happened after he had worked an 8hr shift at a charcoal chicken shop. He has worked at this shop for over a year, and eaten there with no problems. However, it was unusual for him to eat both lunch and dinner at work, and for him to choose chicken and chips, smothered in gravy, for both meals in one day. He read through the ingredients of everything used in the shop, and found that the 'chicken flavouring' added to the stuffing includes E635. This same chicken flavouring is mixed with salt and sprinkled on the chips. The gravy mix used also has E635, and the chicken flavouring is added to the gravy, so there's a double dose there. He has since avoided eating large quantities of E635, ie. he doesn't eat the gravy, he leaves the 'chicken salt' off his own chips, and he's careful to monitor the quantity of 'chicken flavour' added to the stuffing mix. He's had no hives at all since those two episodes. I'm very concerned that the shop owner had no idea that E635 could cause reactions, and that there is no real control over the amount of E635 in any one meal. E635 is in the 'chicken flavour' added to gravy, stuffing and salt. The 'chicken salt' is liberally sprinkled on chicken and chips. How much my son ate that day depends on who made up the gravy and stuffing, and who salted the chips, because there are no exact measurements." (Kiera)

[427] 635: "crabbiness, itchy eyes and black circles under her eyes" (September 2002)

A mother from Melbourne who reacts with a quick, dramatic skin rash (excellent photos are available) to flavour enhancer 635...in Doritos, CCs and a particular flavour of rice crackers. Her 9-year-old daughter also reacts to this additive (after eating only two CCs), with "crabbiness, itchy eyes and black circles under her eyes, like someone has punched her in the face." (Food Intolerance Network letter in response to query from TV producer).

[428] 635: "corn chips" (September 2002)

"One of my friends had a frightening experience on Christmas Eve, which we thought may have been caused by 635 in corn chips. She has never had a reaction like it before, but had eaten quite a few corn chips (and not much else) at a family outing...here is part of what she wrote: - there was one bottle of mineral water, one bottle of wine, 2 packets of corn chips and a salad consisting of lettuce, tomato and cucumber!! Not only that but halfway thru the nite I started to get these itching lumps on my neck and legs. Felt ordinary for the rest of the nite and next morning I noticed more lumps and my ears were red hot and swollen. Managed to get thru the day okay but I didn't feel much like eating and was tired. Next morning...I woke absolutely burning and covered in lumps (or hives as you have probably figured out). I tried to get up and shower but I fainted...my lips swelled up and (my husband) was in a panic. The doctor came and gave me an anti-histamine and within an hour I was better but my blood pressure remained low and I had to stay in bed til my body battled whatever I ate that I was allergic to. Today I am better...the hives are beginning to go and no new ones are appearing. I can walk but I have to tell you I am scared. I don't know what I ate...I think maybe the corn chips...they were flavoured." (Melbourne)

[429] 635: "itchy rash ... kept me up all night" (September 2002)

"I had an itchy rash a few weeks back that kept me up all night. I thought it might have been a reaction to a new soap, but then I remembered the 635 in CCs...I had dug into a larger packet than usual. I hadn't had any other processed food. I haven't had CCs or the rash since then." (Sydney)

[430] 635: "hive/welt rash and ...swelling in the throat and breathing difficulties" (September 2002)

"I realise that Jake is very sensitive more than most, but he also had a very severe reaction to 635...He broke out in a hive/welt rash and also had swelling in the throat and breathing difficulties. The doctor gave him an injection which helped, but the redness was there for days along with headaches. And I also react...I also get welts the size of plates and severe headaches for days where I can't move." (Sydney)