

FOOD INTOLERANCE NETWORK FACTSHEET

Sleep apnoea

[Reader reports](#)

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Failsafers typically report that their sleep apnoea, snoring, and chronic stuffy or runny nose improves on the elimination diet.

Dairy foods are the most commonly implication. For me, avoiding all dairy foods - milk, butter, cream, yoghurt, cheese, milk powder in products such as bread or biscuits - and switching to soymilk (for 12 years) made a huge difference but it was even better when I discovered that I can tolerate A2 milk because it tastes much better and makes it easier for me to stick to my no-A1-milk-products diet. Some people report improvements with goats' milk which also contains predominantly A2 rather than A1 proteins. More information about A2 milk from www.a2australia.com.au or our [A2 factsheet](#).

Everyone is different, so some people may need to do the RPA elimination diet supervised by a dietitian to find out exactly which diet components are causing the problem. It can be one of more of the following:

- dairy foods
- additives
- salicylates
- amines
- glutamates
- gluten
- inhaled chemicals such as salicylates and other VOCs (volatile organic compounds)

Reader reports

[363] Vulnerable new mothers (March 2005)

Before the diet, my son presented with headaches, itchy skin (in elbows, on legs, usually scratching until it bleeds), black circles under his eyes, "jumpy" behaviour, irritability, day and night pants wetting, pains in the tummy and awful loose bowel motions, blocked ears and sleep apnoea as well as incessant snorting and inability to breathe at night. As a baby he had eczema, colic, could not sleep and fussed with breast milk from 4 months ... somebody needs to support vulnerable new mothers to help their fussy kids, not make it worse by shoving disguised dairy foods (or whatever else the particular issue is) down their throats, and then advise the mother to let them scream it out because they obviously have us fooled with sleeping and behaviour problems! by email

[833] Apnoea – brief reader reports (July 2009)

- A nine year old boy from the NT suffered from snoring and sleep apnoea. The elimination diet revealed that a few food additives were responsible sunset yellow (110), the bread preservative (282) and MSG (621). When he later developed the problem while avoiding his food triggers, fumes from a new mattress turned out to be the cause.

- A forty something father who had struggled with sleep apnoea and narcolepsy for twenty years discovered through the RPA elimination diet to his surprise that his problems were due to dietary amines.
- My son had chronic apnoea, at 4 we had his adenoids out and ears cleaned in hospital, fixed the apnoea straight away, little did I know I could have fixed that with taking him off cows milk. He now has fresh goats milk from Woolworths.

[835] Alzheimers, asthma and apnoea (July 2009)

I thought I would share with you briefly my experience of treating my wife who was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. Apart from the Alzheimer's diagnosis, she suffered from asthma, sleep apnoea, was unable to speak more than one word at a time and was going down hill very fast. After a lot of research I decided to put her on to a 90% raw food diet and after one month, she started to speak the odd phrase. This was marvellous and only encouraged me to continue. However the amazing thing was after a few months her asthma symptoms began to disappear and she was able to reduce her dependence on puffers. After six months even the preventer puffer was reduced to almost zero and a year later in consultation with the doctor stopped using puffers altogether. Two and a half years later, she has been symptom free for two winters so confidently predict it has gone forever. Oh by the way her sleep apnoea has gone as well. This experience of curing asthma with raw food is not unique as I have subsequently found out. When visiting your website I realised the raw food diet was eliminating additives. Commercial raw food has other problems i.e. pesticides, growth promoters etc but the experience of using commercial raw food has been worthwhile. Would like to eat organic but currently that's not possible. When visiting, we eat normal food and don't expect others to provide the food we use at home. - by email

[834] Nose full of swollen tissue (July 2009)

My 6 year old son is allergic to dust, cats, and sensitive to some food additives. So far we have had reactions to flavour enhancers (621-635) and annatto (160b) and are looking at the bread preservative (282) now. Just wanting to thank you for putting us on the right track to start with. Our son's nose was 90% full of swollen tissue. He was working 20% harder to breath giving him terrible headaches etc. He is now starting to feel better, sleeping better, behaving better (prev we were told it was adhd - have my doubts now) and generally feeling better - by email

[832] Rhinitis due to dairy foods (July 2009)

A nine-year-old was taking medication for rhinitis that was so bad that he couldn't breathe or talk properly. When this boy eliminated milk as the last stage of going failsafe, both his behaviour and rhinitis improved dramatically. His mother explained: 'Our paediatrician was really surprised. He said he could tell the rhinitis was better, because the hairs in his nose have grown back.' - from Fed Up

[831] 282: Runny nose due to bread preservative calcium propionate (July 2009)

My fourth baby had the same terrible broken night sleep pattern as the other three. After struggling for eight months, she did start to settle down, waking perhaps once a night. This was great until I started her, at 10 months on bread. She immediately returned to night waking - for no apparent reason- and also had a clear runny nose. I found that the bread had preservative 282 in it so we stopped feeding it to her. Within a couple of nights (I guess it had accumulated in her system) she again settled down to a peaceful nights' sleep! AND her nose cleared up! I can't believe that it could have been that simple!

[830] Runny nose due to salicylates including mint flavoured toothpaste (July 2009)

Three years ago I started the RPAH elimination diet and discovered I was suffering intolerance [to dairy as well as other food chemicals. Although other symptoms cleared up] there were a few niggling things, particularly the blocked and running nose, always having my sleeve or back pocket loaded with tissues, ready for the inevitable moment. I had always suffered this morning and evening ritual of a running nose so 'just lived with it'.

(Trying the diet again 3 years later) After a week of full elimination, the runny nose persisted. I read and re-read through your checklist of common mistakes and decided to try plain toothpaste which I never did 3 years ago as my dietician at the time said, 'oh you don't have to give up toothpaste if you don't want to - everything else though' and I never really considered it could cause me such suffering. Well well well. A truly amazing change has occurred for me. No more nose blowing at breakfast time or when I'm settling into bed at night. The tap has officially been turned off!

[919] Snoring, sleep apnea, swollen tonsils and macroglossia due to additives (June 2010)

My five-year-old daughter's two years of snoring escalated a few months ago to sleep apnea. After three weeks of apnea, I consulted two doctors and then decided to feed her only natural foods - nothing out of a package of any kind. After six days, her apnea was gone. After about a month, her snoring was minimal. After two months she rarely snores. Tonight, after feeding her corn tortillas - with preservatives - for dinner, she fell asleep and immediately began snoring.

It was the second doctor, a GP, who noticed her swollen tonsils (I hadn't) and said there was no infection but that they were chronically swollen. After I asked if he thought it could be a reaction to contact with processed foods - because she gets a rash on her face after contact with various sauces - he replied "possibly" and that the darkness under her eyes was a sign of allergies. That was when I decided to take her off all packaged foods on my own until we could have an appointment with an allergist - usually a 2 to 6-month wait here.

We saw a Pediatric Allergist two days ago and she was tested for all the standard things like milk, soy, wheat, dust, cat, dog, etc. and was fine. The allergist suggested she may be sensitive to sulphites because I am allergic to sulpha drugs.

Her face has always turned red exactly where any sauces and liquids out of packages touched her cheeks and mouth. Kraft salad dressings, Heinz ketchup, and canned apple pie filling, plus pear cooler which dribbled over her bare tummy have all cause the redness. I figured that the swollen tonsils - like golf balls - were her internal skin's reaction to a food sensitivity because of how we saw her external skin reacting.

Before removing additives, my daughter's face was always a little chubby-looking with a double chin, although she wasn't chubby. It was the swollen tonsils that were causing the double chin. Now she is more normal in appearance without chubby cheeks and an oversized swollen tongue [macroglossia] that made her speak oddly. Even her voice is no longer nasal. My friends used to comment that she sounded like she had an accent. She also had darkness under her eyes. She is very blond with blue eyes and she always had pinkish-purple bags under her eyes. They are now gone along with her snoring right through the night!

Also, her defiant behaviour really improved and she is far more peaceful after I was able to be very strict with her "no packaged foods" diet. We now have real butter and cream in our house. I make our bread and ice cream too.

I am relieved not to have to put my daughter through surgery to remove her tonsils and adenoids, which is very common with children who have apnea. I feel strongly that everyone involved in a child's health should do all they can to find the cause of the symptoms rather than just treat the symptom by removing the tonsils. - Maree, Canada

Further reading

- Fed Up by Sue Dengate, Random House, 2008
- Friendly Food by Dr Anne Swain and others from the RPAH Allergy Unit, Murdoch Books, 2004.
- [Factsheet on sleep disturbance](#)
- [Introduction to Food Intolerance](#)

www.fedup.com.au

The information given is not intended as medical advice. Always consult with your doctor for underlying illness. Before beginning dietary investigation, consult a dietician with an interest in food intolerance. You can write for our list of supportive dietitians (confoodnet@ozemail.com.au)

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