

FOOD INTOLERANCE NETWORK FACTSHEET

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What are salicylates?

Salicylates are chemicals that occur naturally in many plants – they're a kind of natural pesticide – to protect the plants against insects and diseases. Salicylates are just one group of the hundreds of compounds in foods that can have varying effects on us, depending on how much we eat and how sensitive we are.

How do you pronounce salicylates?

sall as in sally - i as in ink - sill as in silly – ates as in dates.

What kinds of foods/products are they found in?

Salicylates are found in foods from plants: most fruit, some vegetables, herbs, spices, tea and flavour additives. For example, citrus fruit, berries, tomato sauce and mint flavouring are naturally high in salicylates and so are processed foods with those flavours.

Salicylates are also found in medications, fragrances, industrial chemicals, plastics and some pesticides, and can cause adverse effects when inhaled as well as eaten.

What are some of the symptoms of salicylate sensitivity?

- headaches or migraines
- itchy skin rashes such as hives (urticaria), eczema and others
- irritable bowel symptoms – reflux in babies or adults, nausea, vomiting, stomach bloating and discomfort, wind, diarrhoea and/or constipation
- bedwetting, cystitis
- asthma, stuffy or runny nose, nasal polyps, frequent throat clearing,
- behaviour problems such as irritability, restlessness, inattention, oppositional defiance, symptoms of ADHD
- sleep disturbance - difficulty falling asleep, night terrors, frequent night waking, sleep apnoea
- anxiety, depression, panic attacks
- rapid heart beat and arrhythmias
- tinnitus, hyperacusis, hearing loss
- joint pain, arthritis, and more

How many people are salicylate intolerant and don't realise it?

Research shows that about 20% of adults with asthma¹, 60% with of people with food-induced itchy rashes, headaches or migraines, 70% of people with irritable bowel symptoms² and 75% of children with behaviour problems³ may be sensitive to salicylates. In my experience, most people with salicylate intolerance have no idea what could be affecting them.

High levels of salicylates are found in foods considered very good for you - does that surprise people?

Most people think fruit and vegetables are so healthy, you couldn't possibly eat too much of them.

One woman wrote: "From a cancer prevention perspective I am encouraged to eat a diet high in antioxidants (fruit and vege colours of the rainbow). How can I ensure I am getting the correct nutrition eliminating salicylates?"

"It's a myth that fruit is packed full of vitamins and minerals," says Tom Sanders, who is director of the Nutritional Sciences Division at King's College London. "... The really sad thing is that we don't eat enough vegetables, such as cabbage..."⁴

Salicylate sensitive people often think they should eat 'healthy' salicylate-containing foods despite unwanted side effects but this is wrong. Inflammation is increasingly regarded as a contributor to cancer and other diseases. If 'healthy' foods make you ill, they are not healthy for you. Of the top five foods found to be most effective in inhibiting growth of cancer cells, the top four are low in salicylates (Brussels sprouts, cabbage, garlic and shallots or scallions)⁵.

Should we be avoiding salicylate-high foods entirely, or is a little bit ok?

Salicylate sensitivity varies – some people improve just by cutting down, some people have to avoid high salicylate foods, and some people are only affected by an overdose of salicylate medications. Reactions are related to dose - the more you eat, the more likely you are to be affected.

Not a lot is known about salicylates, is it a new area of research?

The benefits of a low salicylate diet were first identified in the US about 35 years ago – but most people are only just becoming aware of it now.

Salicylates are:

- present in varying amounts in nearly all foods and products that come from plants including fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, seeds, flowers and bark⁶
- natural regulators of growth, flowering, ripening, ageing and defence against pests and diseases
- highest in firm unripe fruit and lowest when ripe fruit is ready to drop off the plant
- highest in the skin zone (skin and just under the skin)⁷
- concentrated by processing as in fruit or vegetable juices, sauces, pastes, powders, jams, syrups and flavourings⁶
- increased in genetically engineered plants for greater resistance to disease⁸
- made in laboratories for medications.

Salicylates in medication

The best known salicylate is aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), which was originally extracted from willow bark. When introduced nearly 150 years ago, aspirin was regarded as a completely safe wonder drug but by now numerous side effects have been documented⁹:

- gastrointestinal effects including gastric irritation, bleeding, nausea and vomiting¹⁰
- cardiovascular effects including rapid heart rate, cardiac arrhythmias¹¹
- effects on liver and kidneys⁹
- urticaria, hives, itchy skin rashes^{12,13}
- respiratory effects including asthma^{1,14, 15,16}
- tinnitus (in adults), hearing loss, vertigo, symptoms of Meniere's Disease¹⁷
- central nervous system effects including confusion, short term memory loss, aggression, paranoia, incoherent speech, insomnia, coordination problems, tremors, anorexia (loss of appetite) and lethargy^{18,19,20}
- changes in children's behaviour²¹
- urinary and fecal incontinence²²
- salicylate-induced hypoglycemia^{23,24,25}
- salicylate toxicity in a breastfed baby due to maternal ingestion of aspirin²⁶, showing that salicylates pass into breastmilk.

Some people are much more sensitive than others but it is not possible to predict who will be affected or when they will be affected. NSAID-induced stomach problems are estimated to cause 76,000 hospital admissions and 7,600 deaths each year in the USA²⁷.

Many health professionals warn that chronic salicylism is a common but unrecognised cause of illness in the elderly that is difficult to diagnose because of the huge variety and subtlety of symptoms^{18,19,20}. One group of researchers described the 'protean manifestations' of chronic salicylate toxicity, Proteus being an ancient Greek god who could assume any shape. When their hospital rewarded staff for finding cases, there was a dramatic increase in diagnostic recognition¹⁸.

Salicylates are thought to work by inhibiting the action of two enzymes called cyclooxygenase. Normally these enzymes convert an essential fatty acid called arachidonic acid into prostaglandins - hormone-like chemicals responsible for pain and inflammation - and leukotrienes. When salicylates block the production of prostaglandins, more leukotrienes are produced instead, becoming a problem for people who are sensitive to leukotrienes. Until very recently, research focused on the role of leukotrienes in aspirin-sensitive asthma, but it is now realized that leukotrienes are involved in a wide range of inflammatory conditions²⁸. One implication of this research is that it accounts for the protean manifestations mentioned above.

Salicylates in food

It is not widely accepted that the effects of salicylates in medications can also be caused by salicylates in foods, probably because many so-called 'low-salicylate' diets use an outdated food list and are in fact not low in salicylates²⁹.

As long ago as the 1960s, rheumatologists noticed that children's behaviour could be affected by salicylates in their arthritis medication. One, Professor Eric Bywaters, reported a patient who attacked him with a knife while 'under the influence of salicylates'²¹. In the 1970s, American pediatric allergist Dr Ben Feingold noticed that children's behaviour could also be affected by natural salicylates in foods³⁰. His observations were confirmed in a study showing that children's learning ability could be affected by both salicylates in foods and salicylates in aspirin³¹.

In the mid-80s Australian researchers published a new analysis of salicylate contents in foods showing that there were salicylates in many more foods than previously thought⁶. For people who had already been following low salicylate diets, the new salicylate information was a revelation. 'When I found the Australian salicylate lists I was so excited,' wrote a salicylate-sensitive asthmatic from New Mexico. 'I could finally understand what was happening - I had inadvertently been eating salicylates every day' (see [reader story 228](#)).

The Australian researchers identified other food chemicals that could cause symptoms of food intolerance, including biogenic amines and added and natural glutamates. When they used this new elimination diet, nearly 90 per cent of 140 children with behaviour disturbance improved significantly, of whom nearly three quarters were sensitive to salicylates³.

Other published successes with a low salicylate diet using the Australian list include the following:

Six children with chronic asthma found to be sensitive to salicylates were asked to follow a low-salicylate diet, but compliance was poor. Only one subject maintained the diet for three months by which time this child was free of asthma medication and his lung function had returned to normal³².

In an open trial of a low salicylate, reduced amine diet by another team of Australian researchers, 80 per cent of 516 children with behaviour problems improved³³.

In 2002, I used an additive free, low salicylate, low amine, low glutamate diet²⁹ for the open trial first stage of a double blind placebo controlled study with 27 children. One hundred per cent of the children who completed two to three weeks of the elimination diet improved significantly³⁴. This is the diet that the Food Intolerance Network supports.

A 27 year old university graduate had been diagnosed with inattentive ADHD and obsessive-compulsive disorder in childhood developed anxiety and depression in late teenage. After unsuccessfully trying medication, he began a trial of the elimination diet mentioned above. His symptoms improved significantly during a 4-week elimination diet and he began a set of double blind placebo controlled capsule challenges. Within days of the first capsule challenge his symptoms of depression and others worsened so dramatically that challenges were stopped and the blind was broken – the capsule was found to contain salicylates. Over a long period of time,

open challenges showed that many other food chemicals were also associated with his symptoms³⁵.

Preliminary results from a Melbourne study of diet and behaviour currently underway using the diet mentioned above are encouraging.

Life without fruit

Most parents are reluctant to consider a low salicylate diet. 'How can children live without fruit?' they ask, not realising that it is possible to eat vegetables without fruit. Nearly two thousand years ago, the ancient Greek physician Galen (Claudius Galenus), considered to be the co-founder of modern medicine, wrote that his father had lived to be a hundred by avoiding fruit.

I have spent months in remote subsistence villages in the Himalayas where children eat very little fruit. These children are happy, healthy, well-spoken and eager to learn, sometimes walking up to two hours each way to school. They are mostly vegetarians living on home-grown rice, lentils, dried beans, potatoes and a range of other vegetables in season, with a few fruit trees around the house. 'How much fruit do you eat?' I would ask. After a lot of thought, they would generally estimate 'about one piece a week'. As well there might be fresh milk and yoghurt in season from their own yak-buffalo cross and eggs from their own chickens. Their intake of additives is zero and their intake of high salicylate-containing foods is much lower than ours. My daughter, who had been diagnosed with ADHD and oppositional defiance disorder and had been following a low salicylate diet for years in Australia, is able to eat this Himalayan subsistence diet without ill effects.

As income increases, households move from subsistence to supermarket eating, buying more fat, meat, sugar, wheat, expensive fruits and vegetables and processed foods³⁶. Finally, in the Western diet, intake of whole fruits and vegetables is replaced by products such as fruit juice and hot potato chips and, in adolescence, by soft drinks and fast food such as pizza³⁷.

During the transition from subsistence to supermarket diet, our intake of salicylates increases because salicylates are concentrated in products such as jam, juices, sauces, stock cubes, tomato paste and dried fruit and vegetables. As well, foods are usually picked unripe for long shelf life when salicylates are at their highest, plants are genetically engineered with increased salicylates for disease resistance⁸ and a wide variety of very high salicylate fruit and vegetables are available all year round.

Since food chemicals can be addictive, it is common to find salicylate-intolerant children choosing to eat very little other than the highest salicylate foods, especially tomato sauce, orange juice, broccoli, grapes, berries, kiwi fruit, sultanas, fruit juice and fruit flavoured yoghurts, while their parents think 'well, at least it's healthy'.

In addition, exposure to environmental chemicals such as pesticides and solvents may make people, especially children, more sensitive to other chemicals in foods and in perfumes³⁸.

Very few consumers are affected by one dose of salicylates in foods. More often, as people are exposed to salicylates many times every day, effects build up slowly causing occasional outbreaks of symptoms and no one realizes what is happening. The table below shows how salicylate exposure increases with the Western lifestyle.

Salicylate (SAL) exposure in subsistence villages compared to the Western lifestyle

Salicylates in village life	Salicylates in supermarket life
Fruit and vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picked very ripe (lower in salicylates) • old varieties (lower in salicylates) • more veg eaten (lower in salicylates) • more low SAL veg eaten (e.g. lentils, beans) • fruit and veg are fresh and unprocessed • Spices fresh homegrown, e.g. ginger, cardamom, turmeric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picked hard, unripe (higher in salicylates) • long-shelf-life varieties (higher in salicylates) • more fruit eaten (higher in salicylates) • more high SAL veg eaten (e.g. broccoli) • salicylates concentrated in juice, sauces, flavours • salicylates concentrated in dried spices
Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medications none • skin creams none • perfumes, cleaners none • sensitizers none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aspirin, NSAIDs • toothpaste, teething gel, medicated lotions • perfumed products, cleaners, air fresheners • pesticides, petrol, plasticizers
Drinks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainly water, weak tea (limited) • rice or millet beer (lower in salicylates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less water, more salicylate containing drinks • grape wine, hop beer (higher in salicylates)

The villagers' fruit and vegetables are picked very ripe, often rotting within 24 hours. That is when salicylates are at their lowest, compared to hard, unripe, long-shelf-life supermarket produce that are picked green when salicylates are at their highest, stored, and artificially ripened. There are thousands of traditional varieties of fruit, for example, 6000 varieties of apples in the UK that have previously thrived in various districts, but are now not one of the only ten varieties sold in supermarkets. Newer varieties tend to be developed for their firmness and long shelf life which probably makes them higher in salicylates.

Villagers eat a very high vegetable to fruit ratio, and it is interesting to note that there are many more low-salicylate vegetables than low-salicylate fruit (approximately 30:1). Villagers also have a higher intake of the vegetables that are at the lower end of the salicylate scale. Potatoes, lentils and fresh and dried peas and beans are village staples compared to the abundance of high salicylate fruit and vegetables available in supermarkets year round, out of season and from distant locations. In the villages, fruit is eaten mainly as small quantities of fresh, ripe fruit in season, compared with the Western diet's daily intake of concentrated supermarket products. As well, villagers are not exposed to salicylates through healthcare products, household cleaners or other industrial chemicals.

How to reduce salicylate intake

Choose more fruit and vegetables from the lower end of the salicylate scale, such as traditional pears, potatoes, green beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, celery, lettuce, leeks, garlic, kidney and other beans, golden and red delicious apples, carrots and butternut pumpkin, and avoid those at the highest end of the scale such as berries, citrus, melons, stone fruit such as plums, grapes, dried fruit, tomatoes, avocados, broccoli and silverbeet. For recipes with low to medium salicylates see the [Failsafe booklet](#) on www.fedup.com.au.

- nutritionists recommend **2 pieces of fruit** and **5 serves of vegetables** per day – do not exceed this recommendation for fruit
- eat whole unprocessed fruit and vegetables rather than processed food with strong fruit or vegetable flavours, including juice, fruit yoghurts, jams, sweets, soup stocks and sauces
- peel fruit and vegetables well to avoid the high concentrations of salicylates in the skin zone
- coffee is much lower in salicylates than tea, decaf is lower still
- use plain unperfumed soap, washing powder, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, cosmetics, skin cream, sunblock; avoid flavoured toothpaste; avoid airfresheners, aerosol products, fragranced household cleaners, essential oils and highly scented cut flowers. See alternatives in the [Failsafe Booklet](#) on www.fedup.com.au.
- avoid salicylates in many prescription and over-the-counter medications including aspirin, oil of wintergreen and any medications or skin creams³⁹ containing salicylates or with a warning for asthmatics in the Consumer Medicine Information sheet, arthritis creams, sports creams like Dencorub, Vicks Vaporub, teething gel and oral gels like Bonjela and Ora-Sed, wart removers, acne cleansers and wipes, some insect repellents and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Nurofen (ibuprofen) – although technically NSAIDs do not contain aspirin, many salicylate sensitive people react to them¹. For a useful list of salicylates in topical medications see the following list but ignore the limited information about salicylate-containing foods:
www.pkwy.k12.mo.us/pierre/documents/TopicalProd.pdf.

For best results with food intolerance symptoms

You can do an additive-free, low salicylate elimination diet supervised by a dietitian. Write to confoodnet@ozemail.com.au for our list of supportive dietitians.

For some people, any amount of dietary salicylates is too much. A common mistake on the elimination diet is to drink pear juice, which contains pears with peel. While a peeled, ripe pear contains very low salicylates, juice with peel will contain salicylates, so one glass per day of pear juice can reverse the benefits of an elimination diet. This is why doctors who advise 'do the diet but not too seriously' are effectively sabotaging the outcome. For best results, the diet must be followed absolutely strictly for three weeks. It is usual then to do a supervised reintroduction (challenge) to confirm whether salicylates are a problem. Warning: with Meniere's disease, too many salicylates can lead to irreversible hearing loss, so physicians recommend that challenges not be attempted. Instead the aim is to reduce exposure to salicylate from all sources until symptoms improve, while at the same time eating as many salicylate containing foods as can be managed so that the diet is not unnecessarily restricted. This is not intended as medical advice – please consult your dietitian or physician.

Reader stories

[926] Didn't realise my daughter was affected by salicylates (June 2010)

I am a primary teacher with 3 children of my own. I first heard about your book 'Fed Up' when a student in my class was diagnosed with ADHD and his mother decided to try changing his diet rather than medicating him. The change in this boy was amazing. I wrote down the details of your book to recommend it to other parents in the future, but ironically I now use your book myself as my six year old has just been diagnosed with ADHD. We had been eating a diet low in artificial additives for years after discovering that my children were reacting to the preservative 282 in bread but have just recently begun failsafe eating after my son's diagnosis. In doing so we discovered that all 3 of our children were reacting to salicylates. Even my 7 year old daughter who had been irritable all the time and difficult to get along with has changed into a happy, co-operative child since changing her diet. We hadn't even realised that she was affected by the natural food chemicals. Our son who was diagnosed with ADHD has changed so much that at a recent doctor's visit the GP looked at him sitting quietly and said, "He doesn't have ADHD!" The doctor prescribed antibiotics to clear his cough and after one dose of antibiotics (with preservative and flavour) all his symptoms returned. We are now more sure than ever that food is the cause of his behavioural problems.- Cara, NSW

[407] My children were on an extremely healthy diet (March 2006)

After failsafeing my children we have seen a great improvement in their behaviour. My eldest daughter (nearly 5yrs) was diagnosed with ODD. She is so much happier and easier to live with since being on the diet. My youngest daughter had dry eczema on her arms that has all but disappeared. Both of my children were on what would have been considered an extremely healthy diet (fit for life) with very little junk food and loads of fruit and vegetables. They have both improved considerably over the four or five months on the diet. Thanks for the work you have done in making us aware of what really is in our food. We have tried many things to help our eldest daughter with little success and were at our wits end. Food has turned out to be a big key. Now some of the other methods we had previously tried (eg. reward charts) actually work. If we have a slip on the diet it's like a wall goes up in her mind and she can't listen anymore. – Belinda, by email

[036] "Easily enraged" on salicylates (excerpt, April 2000)

My daughter reacts to salicylates by becoming easily enraged and blaming everyone for everything. She is, by the way, the most un-ADD person I've every met - highly organised, very logical, and a real old head on young shoulders -very knowing and mature and reasonable. She is also academically gifted. My son becomes hyper and idiotic and unable to learn when he has more than moderate salicylates in his diet. - Qld

[125] "To say I felt better would have been the understatement of a new millenium" (September 2001)

I was searching on the internet for some clues to my life long digestive problems, when I came across the food allergy section on the About.com website. The featured food allergy topic happened to be salicylates ... just out of curiosity, and for the heck of it, I clicked on the link, and started to read about it ... I first off read the list of common symptoms. As I read it the list was all to familiar to me ... I answered Yes to every symptom. Needless to say, I started to follow a salicylate free diet. To say I felt better would have been the understatement of a new millenium..... ALL of my life I have suffered from very frequent urination, constipation, stomach bloating, short temper, irritability, inability to concentrate, memory problems, severe acne, dry skin (especially on my hands and feet), those restless legs, and more ...<sigh>... The worst of it for me though was the constant urination, and constipation which led to a lot of gas ... Thank you

so much for your work, and your book. Both have changed my life forever. I am finally free of a problem which has literally ruined my life. In case you're wondering, I'm 37 years old ... And yes, 36 years is WAY too long to suffer with this health problem. Sometimes I don't know how I made it this long with my sanity intact. - from the USA

[122] Restless Legs Syndrome (August 2001)

Restless Legs Syndrome was absolutely driving me crazy. If I forced my legs to be still, they would then jerk with even greater intensity. While I was watching TV, my legs were constantly swinging, because of this urge to move them. They were not itchy - it was just like there was something under the skin driving me crazy. Apparently most sufferers go on to become alcoholics which I can understand. American websites about RLS basically fall back onto all sorts of medication, which I do not want to take. Within two weeks of trying the elimination diet, I was able to sit still at night, AND get into bed without fear of tossing and turning all night because of this urge to move my legs. I now know the foods I should not touch - salicylates and additives ... when I eat any of these forbidden foods there is a definite reaction. - NSW

[114] Paresthesia (numbness) (August 2001)

I am sensitive to salicylates as the result of overuse of Ibuprofen (chemically very similar to aspirin). I developed asthma-like respiratory symptoms when eating certain foods but couldn't figure out which foods were responsible. Then I developed paresthesia in my left thigh when I took a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug which was prescribed for back pain. Ironically, all of the muscle pains etc. disappeared once I removed everything from my diet that I was sensitive to. - USA [Commonly called 'pins and needles' paraesthesia is a sensation of numbness, prickling and tingling that is normally felt in a limb or extremity.] - USA

[108] Salicylates from the beginning (August 2001)

On advice from our paediatrician (believe it or not) we took our 3.5 yo son off salicylates from the beginning. I typed in this unknown word and got your website and cried and contacted you and you recommended a dietitian ... we have the most unbelievable son now as long as we stick close to his 'food plan', we don't call it a diet. ...I just can't express our gratitude enough - life is completely different within our household and for our son himself. - Qld

[102] Overweight due to salicylates (August 2001) excerpt

Around the middle of last year I realised that I generally felt unwell. But worst of all was my bloated stomach, which most times looked like I was 7 months pregnant, and the related bowel problems. Looking back I had been gradually getting worse for a couple of years ... I went on the strict diet for several weeks. I tried the challenges and narrowed my causes down to dairy and salicylates (both of which I had normally in large quantities). I then got caught up in a round of end of year work functions and lunches, so I was not able to be so strict with myself. I went backwards quickly ...

Now I avoid all processed foods, eat failsafe at home, and make informed choices when out. I love wine but have cut down to a couple of glasses per week, have decaf coffee, soy milk etc. The result has been a new zest for life - new role at work, back to studying part time and lots of activities. I'm back to size 12 clothes (have bought lots of new ones). I turn 50 next week and feel like 40. I'm a bit evangelical when I tell people why I've lost so much weight. - NSW

[212] Weight is dropping off (October 2002)

We are doing the elimination diet for my three children. I have been on the diet too and on the two occasions I had chocolate with my husband, I had a huge headache the next day. I have been a chocoholic all my life!! I also had a headache for the first week due to withdrawals, I presume. The best thing is I am not craving sweets and the weight is dropping off me!! I am losing about half a kilo a week (except during the salicylate challenge). – by email

[093] Life threatening anaphylactoid reaction to salicylates (October 2000)

My friend has followed your diet and had only one small reaction (and she admits to "cheating" some that day) in the last 11 months. Before that, she was speeding to the hospital in an ambulance about every 10 -14 days. Now she has not done that in nearly a whole year - THANKS to your book and food lists. She has also reduced the antihistamines that she takes by more than half ... Her own allergy doctor is very impressed with her current health and has sent for "Fed Up" also. It seems weird that she has had to find her own help and that doctors seem to have little knowledge of her allergy to natural aspirin. Thanks again for your help. She is my close friend and lives alone but now I don't fear for her safety because the life threatening reactions have disappeared. Her overall health and energy levels have greatly increased. Without your website, current correct information, and books, coping was so difficult. - reader's friend, USA

[080] Helped us to realise what his problems might be caused by (October 2000)

I have a near 7 year old with an intolerance to salicylates. Your book "Fed Up" helped us realise what his problems might be caused by, and since he has been on a low salicylate diet, his behaviour, school work etc have improved dramatically! - reader, email

[387] HHT (Hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia) and a low salicylate diet (March 2006)

Our family has been largely failsafe for the past couple of years due to our daughter's behaviour, but an added side benefit seems to have emerged. My husband has a rare disorder called Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia (HHT) which causes his capillaries to balloon and bleed easily. His blood count is always very low and like all HHT sufferers, nosebleeds have always been part of his life. He has had far fewer nosebleeds since he's avoided salicylates and that's the only change that he's made. I wonder if it could be that the lack of salicylates decrease the bleeding? He can't ever take aspirin, so I suppose it makes sense, but if my suspicions are correct, then other HHT sufferers might benefit as well. I would think that it's worth investigating and I will certainly share it with anyone who is interested or concerned. – *Chris*, NSW(vwilder@optusnet.com.au)

[414] Gastroscopy results and the failsafe approach (May 2006)

Some years ago now, I remember reading a message from a failsafer who'd had a gastroscopy before he went failsafe, which showed scarring and evidence of reflux, and he was put on strong antacids and told he might eventually need an operation (presumably to repair the gastric sphincter).

Exactly the same happened to me. I get the neurological symptoms (depression, paranoia, neurosis, ADD, visual discomfort and dyslexia - which improves but hasn't been resolved), but I also had years of gastric symptoms and had had two gastroscopies before I discovered failsafe eating. The first one showed no ulcer but that the lining was inflamed. After the second I had exactly the same diagnosis as in the story above. I remember the gastroenterologist telling me that although the symptoms weren't typical, the problem was definitely reflux, and suggesting the operation.

After I had been on the diet for some years, I had another gastroscopy to investigate the possibility of coeliac sprue. This wasn't found (thank heavens) but it did demonstrate that the scarring and inflammation that had previously been there was now gone. The diet had resolved about 10 years of painful gastric symptoms for me. I'm just wondering whether there might be other adults or children who have had the same experience. As people are so keen on physical evidence, maybe someone could pool the results and put out a paper? - reader, NSW

[157] The orange-picking monster (June 2002) excerpt

My son has an intolerance to salicylates and [since sticking to the diet] we have had two years incident free, until recently. It seems my son can react to salicylates just from handling them. We have a weekend house that has prolific orange trees. One Saturday afternoon when my son was picking oranges for the rest of the family to eat, he became "the monster". There was no improvement and on Monday morning he fought with his sister about juicing the oranges. At school he was worse than anyone had seen him before, running away from the classroom. When he was found and taken back to class, he locked the teacher and children out of the classroom. The deputy took him to her office to try to calm him down (she is a believer in the diet) and claims that he just continued to babble and talk gibberish. He was suspended from school for two days after this incident. All his regular teachers are at a loss to explain how this child who is by nature helpful, courteous and bubbly can suddenly become this "monster". After the monster phase he became very lethargic and fell asleep continually. He was still irritable and altogether it took two weeks for him to return to his old self. - by email

[137] Unsettled breastfed baby (December 2001)

My sister is finding life much easier with her baby thanks to modifying her diet. She removed very high salicylates and amines and it seemed to have an immediate affect on his behaviour. They now have much more settled nights. She found that every time she ate even a small amount of tomato, wine, chocolate etc, that they had a difficult night and that it just wasn't worth it! Thank you for your information and support. It was also very helpful for me as a breastfeeding counsellor to be involved with a particular case and to see that diet can have an effect. I feel more able to suggest to mothers that this might be something to look into if their baby continues to be unsettled. - reader, Qld

[129] "I am an early childhood nurse ..." (November 2001) excerpt

My daughter Rosie is now 14 months old. She continues the elimination diet, and still loves her food. We finally tried some challenges. Salicylates were a disaster, (pumpkin twice a day for 2 days and a granny smith apple core), she became irritable, clingy, whiny etc, then vomited, with no associated illness. - NSW

[152] The first 19 months - Dani's diary (April 2002) excerpt

Birth - Chris is born nearly 2 months early. We stay in hospital until Chris is a month old. Staff regularly comment on the huge amount of crying he does and his restlessness. They put this down to a consequence of being prem and assure me he will be more normal and settled by the time he was due to be born.

2 mths - Chris doesn't settle - he gets worse, screaming and crying all the time all day and night. Regularly passes out from lack of oxygen.

3 1/2 mths - I am totally exhausted and can not cope at all anymore - sick of the lack of support and everybody telling me that babies cry and I should just get over it. They all think I am a hypochondriac. I start colouring behaviour charts showing his screaming/crying/grizzling and sleep. I now know I am not exaggerating or pulling things out of proportion - the charts show he is worse than I thought. He is crying and screaming for about 18 hours out of 24. When he does

sleep out of exhaustion it will be for one or two hours only - generally throughout the night. He rarely sleeps during daylight hours.

I ring my doctor in desperation. I am afraid I might hurt Chris if I don't get some sleep soon and get him sorted out. My doctor admits us to hospital. The staff take over Chris and I get to sleep. Staff are amazed at the amount Chris screams - at first they think it is just because he is away from me and home but I assure them he is the same at home. His crying continues non stop even after being in hospital over a week and in my arms a lot of the time. The doctor suggests we try the elimination diet. We see our local dietitian. I start the diet.

4 1/2 mths - Chris is getting a lot better. He isn't screaming near as much though is still crying a fair bit. We really notice it when I eat anything on the no go list - we have to cope with his screaming within 24 hours.

5 1/2 mths - My behaviour charts show that Chris is improving a lot. He is now crying more than screaming. I still can't get him to sleep during the day. (The diet is not as effective as it should be because I am making salicylate mistakes like drinking way too much lemonade and eating lots of carrots and pumpkin - but I don't find that out for another 10 months.)

14 mths - Chris goes off all carrots and pumpkin - makes it really hard for me to find foods to get him to eat as he eats a huge amount of each of these. We notice a big change in Chris - he stops grizzling altogether and is suddenly really easy to manage. He is a lot more agreeable!! Have a look through my books and discover that pumpkin and carrot are moderate in salicylates - I thought they were low!! No wonder he wasn't 100%. He was obviously getting too many salicylates!

19 mths - Chris is now fantastic. We are really enjoying him. - Dani, WA

[228] Severe Aspirin Induced Asthma (January 2003) excerpt

I have Samter's Triad syndrome, also known as Aspirin Induced Asthma (AIA). About 10 per cent of people with Samter's syndrome also get urticaria (hives) and/or angioedema (swelling of the lips, tongue, neck etc). Angioedema can be so severe as to cause death by suffocation, so it is considered a medical emergency. ...

When I was 18, I went into anaphylactic shock when I was given the wrong pain medicine (Darvon - containing aspirin) by accident. I took one pill and within 15 minutes was unconscious. I was in intensive care for a week, then in the respiratory wing for another week. During that time, I was given a gingerale soda and went into another anaphylactic reaction. That is when they figured out I was sensitive to salicylates in foods and yellow #5 dye and was diagnosed with what they called Triad Asthma back then.

Since that time I have tried just about every low salicylate diet that the doctors or I could find. I know now they were not complete nor correct. I was ingesting many foods like broccoli, cauliflower and onions on a daily basis, under the impression that they were safe. I had what they called mini-anaphylactic reactions nearly every day and was put on prednisone, asthma medication and an antihistamine on a daily schedule to control reactions. Salicylates kept building up in my system until the daily prednisone wasn't stopping the reactions and I would end up in the hospital again ...

When I found the Australian salicylate lists I was so excited. I could finally understand what was happening. I was inadvertently eating salicylates every day. - from the USA

[215] Autism and diet (October 2002) excerpt

My son is 3 ½ and was diagnosed with Autism at 2½. He also presented with almost all of the criteria for the hyperactivity side of ADHD. The diagnosing doctor gave us very little information to go ahead with. By good fortune my husband picked up Sue Dengate's Failsafe Cookbook the weekend after our son was diagnosed, when I was still reeling and had no idea which direction to head in. We went looking for triggers for our sons hyperactive bouts, he was always active, preferring to permanently run rather than walk, and he had no attention span, but sometimes he would just go off, usually for about two days, where he would literally climb the furniture, sitting on top of the bookshelf, watching TV upside down, while lying on top of it, and he was causing his older sister, not to mention his parents, huge amounts of grief.

Early intervention has proved a godsend, but even so, we couldn't get him to sit still, or even sit down! and ADHD drug trialling was mentioned, if we couldn't improve his behaviour. This made me very nervous because previously any medication, bar panadol, for more than 3 days, sent him berserk. I now understand this to be the flavourings in all children's medication (I thought I was covering my bases buying colour-free!) Before I went to RPAH I had done quite a lot of work on his diet myself, and we had discovered a lot ourselves, but after I'd read Sue's book and been to RPAH I was able to make a real difference for our son. His biggest problem is salicylates and colourings - why didn't anyone know to tell me that bad nappy rash is always a sign of salicylate intolerance? That sign was present from when he was a baby. I always put it down to teething - how wrong I was! What a huge amount of grief we could have been saved if we'd known.

Our son is a typical limited Autistic eater. We were told that he was eating a good nutritious diet and we shouldn't interfere. After RPAH and Sue's book, we learned that almost everything our son was eating was bad for his intolerances

We are only in the second month of the elimination diet, with several mishaps already under our belts, but I really wanted to encourage anyone who is thinking about the diet, dealing with Autism or ADHD - give it a go - you'll learn a lot. It has lowered the stress on our family, particularly his five year old sister, considerably, and has made our son far easier to deal with. Also, when he is not affected by a food infringement, his eye contact improves, he is coming out with new words every week, and is approaching other teachers, apart from his regular carer, something he's never done before.

Interestingly, before we went to RPAH, Sue Dengate told us the main problem would be salicylates but I couldn't face it, I thought it was too hard. It really wasn't that hard, and the fast results were well worth it ... I hope I can encourage others out there to give it a go. - from the failsafe2 discussion group

[182] 282: "wonderful changes" (September 2002)

My son was experiencing behavioural and learning problems. Through diet (eliminating 282, other additives and some salicylates) I have seen some wonderful changes in him, especially in his sleeping. For the first time in his five years of life, he is sleeping 12-14 hours a day. - email, WA

[169] "I didn't think I could do without" (September 2002)

I'm starting to get on top of this diet but it has taken ages because I've only just got around to eliminating the things I didn't think I could do without - like a cup of tea with breakfast. Sometimes you just can't believe something that feels so good, so right, can be so bad - but I seem to react (with migraines) to both salicylates and amines. I also react to milk - not incredibly sensitive, but more than about half a cup and I'm gone - and it took me quite a long time to admit that. - email, NSW

[237] " better than on full medication with NO side effects" (February 2003)

I'd like to tell you what your diet has done for my son. He used to be on Ritalin. I talked with our doctor about you and how I was going to do the diet (our whole family is doing it). We felt the claims may have been a bit exaggerated but have some benefit possibly. So I thought 'I have tried everything else with Sam, I may as well give this a go. I have nothing to lose'.

WELL, within 2 days !!!!!!! my feral son DID in fact become an angel!!! just like - no, better - than on full medication with NO side effects and it has lasted. It has been two weeks now. I don't know yet what he is intolerant to until we start the challenges.

It's not as though we had an unhealthy diet. We used to check the labels for artificial food colours, preservatives and other additives because we already found out that made him ten times worse.

I'm excited about it. I never dreamed it would work SO well! We did put him on the medication for Sunday morning at church but that was the only bad time on the diet. He cried the whole morning till it wore off, so we won't be giving it to him anymore. He is so much better. I can't wait till his next appointment with our doctor - he wants to know the results. I will sing your praises. I have stuck to the diet like the Bible. None of us have compromised in anything, although I desperately crave pizza, Diet Coke and tomatoes and hope I'll get over that soon. I have attached a photo of Sam before. The picture says it all. Thanks so much.- Lisa. (Footnote: So far, Sam has reacted to both salicylate and amine challenges.)

[319] 'Most improved mathematician' (April 2004)

I tried the failsafe diet several years ago unsuccessfully. I realise now that I was not strict enough with the salicylates and additives. So, once again I've turned to the book, this time with new vigour. After three days, my child who has learning difficulties and is repeating year 1 has been praised by three different teachers and is receiving an honour certificate at school (a positive reinforcement program). My older son (9) received an award on the same day for the 'most improved Mathematician - Years 4-7'. They do a fortnightly maths test (same test each time -they have a copy at home to practice) - he doubled the number of questions answered in the allotted time and got nearly all of them right with only one short trial at home. I am determined to continue this time. Thanks so much - we may have finally found the answers. - email.

[270] A 21-year-old looks back on diet (June 2003)

When I was around 4 years old I had quite severe behavioural problems, so my mum went from doctor to doctor looking for a possible solution. Eventually one doctor suggested the Feingold diet. I started the elimination diet in 1986, and my parents found an immediate improvement. One day my grandparents gave me red cordial which pretty much confirmed the effects of food additives. My parents and I found that I reacted to salicylates, and lots of artificial colours and flavours.

I went from a kid who everyone said would grow up to be a juvenile delinquent, to a better behaved kid who is now 21, studying for an Information Technology Bachelors degree. I also finished a 12-month employment contract not long ago and started a new job.

I'm surprised that it's only recently that people have been talking about the link between food and behaviour. – student, Australia

[265] Reversals during salicylate challenge (June 2003)

We started our salicylate challenge on a Sunday. By Monday afternoon, my son was climbing the furniture more than normal and told me he felt silly. He was very giggly. On Tuesday afternoon he was again climbing the furniture and not responding to me when I talked to him. He was very happy and giggly again and it was actually kind of nice. His writing has improved so much lately, I was astounded when we sat down to do his homework and he started writing badly again. About

75% of his letters were backwards and he couldn't work out how to spell easy words. This is what really shocked me and what will make me avoid salicylates. When he got dressed he even put his clothes on backwards! - failsafer, by email

[262] Stuttering (June 2003)

Our latest mistake was when our son was given a "special treat" of a glass of orange juice by his well meaning grandparents. Aaaaaargh. Since then his speech has gotten worse. We noticed his speech worsened when we did the salicylate challenge. The speech problems come into play when he is hyper, which is days 1-2 post salicylate and slowly improves from there. - by email

[312] Naturopathic way makes us sicker (April 2004)

I have been using your book like a bible for my four-year-old and have had wonderful success. Without it I don't think our family would have survived. Our little boy has salicylate sensitivity and is also affected by a lot of preservatives and colours. He previously suffered from severe bloating, diarrhoea and stomach cramps which are controlled with this diet. His severe rages and tantrums also went away almost instantly when we started failsafe eating. My son is very grateful because he doesn't like having stomach cramps. He said to me one day when he was only three, 'Mummy what are we going to do about my tummy, it really hurts' and that was when I found your book.

I am a nutritionist and have studied through natural health colleges. I have found that trying to help my son and myself the naturopathic way only makes us much sicker, as you stated in your book. My son cannot take herbal supplements or eat lots of fruit and vegetables. - NSW.

[310] Asthma and eczema due to salicylates (December 2003)

Since we discovered salicylates, my daughter doesn't need preventative medication anymore although I have made a few slip ups with her diet. Every time she has a reaction I look at what she has eaten and it is always salicylates. For example, she had a reaction to rissoles in the early stages of the diet before I had your books to help me. My dietitian said, 'Did you put pepper in the rissoles?' I hadn't realised pepper was high in salicylates and used it automatically. Last year I bought some "Kids Bananas" from Coles because my daughter never ate more than half of the usual big Cavendish bananas. Two days later her eczema had flared up and then she got asthma. By this time she had eaten three of these bananas. They must have been sugar bananas which are high in salicylates but I didn't know that at the time. During that attack she had to go back on her preventer medication as well as Ventolin but she hasn't needed it since. - Qld

[297] Mouth ulcers from face cream (September 2003)

I have an aspirin intolerance and it took me ages to work out that my chronic mouth ulcers were being caused by beta hydroxy acid in my face cream because it is easily absorbed through the skin.- by email

[288] Finding out about asthma and food chemicals (September 2003)

What you say in your book 'Fed Up with Asthma' about food intolerances making the airways sensitive to triggers like viruses is what happened to my daughter. She is intolerant to salicylates, although it took a long time for me to find out. When she was two years old, I had noticed that her eczema seemed to flare up a day or two after eating spaghetti. I mentioned this to a dietitian I was seeing for other health problems. She said that it could be salicylates, so I stopped giving my daughter spaghetti and tomatoes, but she still had eczema. Then when she turned three, she started getting asthma. The doctor always said that the asthma was triggered by a virus but there were times where she would get asthma without having a virus first.

At the Child Care/Kindy Christmas Party, the only thing they had to drink was cordial. My daughter had never had any fruit juice or cordial to drink up to this time, only water or milk, but we gave her half a cup of cordial to drink because she was thirsty and we hadn't brought any drinks with us. That night she had asthma. About a month later her father gave her a Winnie the Pooh Raspberry fruit drink and she also had asthma that night. When I told the doctor about this, she said did I think it was the colour? but didn't do anything, just told me about treatment.

My daughter was now getting asthma every month and needing stronger medication so I went back to the dietitian who prescribed vitamin supplements and took her off dairy foods. My daughter continued to get asthma and her eczema got worse, and this is how I found out about salicylates. The dietitian had told me to mix the powdered supplements in fruit juice and one of the child care centre workers mentioned that oranges can be a problem. It finally 'clicked'. I had been mixing the vitamins in orange juice. I got the dietitian to send me a list of all the foods that were salicylates so I could avoid them. After a few weeks my daughter's skin started clearing up and she has never had asthma again, even when she had a bad flu this winter. Dairy products give her the odd ear infection, less than once a year, but they don't affect her asthma.- reader, Qld

[342] Helpless, hopeless depression due to salicylates (Sept 2004)

I have suffered depression since at least age 15 and am 38 now. I self medicated on huge amounts of alcohol over the years, and was always very emotional and explosive. Either very 'up' or totally down and in a complete mess.

When I fell pregnant at age 29, I sank into a deep depression that only worsened with a long labour and breastfeeding difficulties. I was prescribed Prozac and stayed on this medication for seven years during which time I tried to come off twice with very bad results.

I did a lot of counseling and support group work regarding childhood abuse issues, relationship and communication counseling work with my husband, and received the assistance of a social worker with trying to manage mothering my child. My daughter was three before I received this assistance and also started to work through my own emotional issues. It took until she was six before I came across Sue's information about diet. My daughter always had Oppositional Defiant Disorder behaviours and was not interested in learning at school or at home, but it had been presumed that it was I who was not coping. Which I wasn't anyway, to top it off! ODD people can appear so normal to others making me seem quite neurotic.

I came off antidepressants again at the beginning of last year after having felt very level for quite a few months in a row. It was a very rocky 12 months. At times I was OK and at others I thought I would not survive unless I went back on the drugs. At least my husband was far more understanding at this point, but I wouldn't have called it a life.

I know now that we (my daughter and I) had been bouncing off each other for years. Her behaviour and concentration improved enormously on the diet. It has changed our lives. We laugh, play, cuddle and talk together instead of constant aggression and fighting. I cannot remember ever being so level and calm and capable. I cried with joy (or over the loss?) one night when she was just so caring towards me. Of course we still have bad times. Everyone does after all. Now we have good times too.

When we tested salicylates, as soon as I woke the next day I could feel the return of my helpless, hopeless, awful black depression. I wanted to strike out at others in my pain. Once again I couldn't think straight to make even the simplest of decisions. I hated myself and anyone that I loved. It took about five days before I started to come up again. I don't ever want to feel like that again and I know what causes it now. To be able to say that feels so good. I have some form of control over a life that was totally out of control. I find the diet very hard in some ways, but I know

which I prefer. To maintain my life in any reasonably happy form, I need to be failsafe. - reader, Vic

[332] I realize how depressed I was about the constant battles (July 2004) excerpt

We've always been a "really healthy" family with me doing heaps of home cooking (baking biscuits, all wholefood type ingredients, homemade casseroles and everything). Everyone commented on it. But they also noticed my two boys who have become increasingly unbearable to live with. Thank heavens that I have two other children who are near-perfect, otherwise I think I would have sunk into a deep depression over my "obviously inadequate" parenting skills!! As it was, I've gotten pretty depressed about living with these dreadful boys and their seemingly illogical, self-destructive behaviour and foolish choices. They are both so different with their problems but the results are so similar - my stress levels have just climbed over the past couple of years.

Anyway we started our elimination diet 5 weeks ago. I am really organised and exact when I am strongly motivated and I can swear I did it perfectly from day one. Results so far? What a change in one child (8yrs). From a monster that we (almost) hated to a lovely pleasant human. And without having to be horrible disciplinarian parents! The other child (10yrs) is a lot more canny about what we were looking for, and incredibly stubborn. He has worked out that a positive result could spell disaster for some of his favourite foodstuffs so he has been playing dead, claiming headaches, stomach aches etc and being totally miserable, despite rewards etc.

Then we did the salicylate challenge. The child I did not suspect for salicylates reacted so strongly, I couldn't believe it ... so did the other one, but I suspected him. Then the amines - again, reactions but different ones - I can actually link specific mood types to these substances. I am a normally suspicious and sceptical person but this is incredible. I feel so stupid that I didn't think of this before ... but it seems everyone says that, so I don't feel alone.

We still have more challenges to do, but I didn't want to wait any longer before saying "thank you" so very much for your work. I cannot say how much this means to me - I was expecting the 8 year old to be in remand school by the time he is 12, and now I know I can change his whole outlook on life! I'm not depressed about my family situation anymore but feeling really positive and hopeful even though it means a lot of hard work. Only looking back do I realise how depressed I was about the constant battles with the boys. - NSW

[340] Depression: Return of energy after diet (Sept 2004)

After the birth of my first son I was diagnosed with post natal depression (PND) and had a few months on an antidepressant (Seroxat also known as Paxil and Aropax). I was soon pregnant with my second son and while pregnant avoided alcohol (this later turned out to be important). During both pregnancies I ate well, although not failsafe, and felt great.

After my second son was born I was again diagnosed with PND and went back on Seroxat and I was on varying doses of that or similar medication altogether for 6 years. I needed them and they helped me. I could not have coped the first three years with all the stress going on in our lives. My second son had been a very sick baby, I was stressed with him and an overactive toddler, and when things did balance out for the boys – when we went failsafe – we had a big move and I had a huge amount of stress again with that life change.

In addition, I visited psychologists on a regular basis, had light therapy, and tried other sorts of complementary therapies such as vitamins and herbal therapies but nothing that "replaced" the medication. All helped in various ways at different stages, particularly the first two. Then eighteen months ago I went totally failsafe and regained my life! I felt like the "old me", pre-children me was back. I had energy, wasn't continually tired, didn't have continual body aches, headaches and wasn't depressed. I didn't "need" red wine and cheese comforts (amines overloads, not to

mention other preservatives). After about 5 years of lacking normal energy, and being down, this was and is cause for celebration.

So I celebrated with red wine and realised that this was a primary cause along with the amine overloads that had been causing MANY of my problems. I'm not a big drinker, but had fallen in the habit of sharing a bottle of wine once or twice a week with my husband.

I still find it hard to believe the difference I have gained in myself from mainly the diet change. I respond to high salicylates and medium amines, but the things that affect me worst have combinations of both, such as wine, cheese, and local hot dog sausages.

At its worst, with the depression I could and would burst into tears over nothing and worst of all lost all my energy. I needed afternoon sleeps as I couldn't survive a day without them and just achieving half an ordinary persons daily tasks was a huge achievement for me. I don't know what others thought of me, but I had a big battle coping over my body's responses and why I couldn't do more than make the beds and vacuum half the house in a day. If I did manage to do more on a good day then I wrote myself off for a couple of days afterwards.

The biggest difference and what constantly surprises me is the return of energy. I had just thought I was overweight and unfit, which was partly true. But now since being failsafe, I can ride the three km into town and home again without a huge effort, and without training! It is just an example of the things that over five years I just took for granted that I couldn't do – I had huge problems trying to keep to regular exercise, even mild walking programs as when I became depressed I lost all my energy. I notice it now when I challenge the amines. I am managing well so long as I keep failsafe. - Reader, Europe

[323] Dodgy doctors and salicylates (April 2004) (excerpt)

I've kept my 12 year old's asthma at bay for most of his life with dust mite control, no additives etc. Since the Christmas holidays started he's had a virus and then constant asthma. I visited a doctor two weeks ago and he put my son on a wheat free, dairy free, additive free diet (all of which I've done before) as well as salicylate free diet for which he gave me a list of good and bad foods. He also recommended steaming eucalyptus twice a day for mucus control as well as some supplements.

After 10 days there had been no improvement so I sat down and reread your book as well as Friendly Food from RPAH. I found his list had been quite misleading and probably the worst thing has been the twice daily sucking in of eucalyptus oil!

There must be a lot of doctors out there like this who send people off with half-baked lists and advice and consequently end up with very spurious results. Most of the population treat doctors as gods and never question them but, as I have proven on many occasions, they are not infallible and people need to be a lot more aware and questioning. It has been hard yakka trying to get my son to give up so many different foods and all for nought as now we will need to find somebody who really knows what they are doing and start again. Had I not had your book, we could have come to the conclusion that the problem is not salicylates, whereas there is a possibility that it is. - by email.

[335] I thought my child was not a "foodie" (July 2004)

When my 8-year-old daughter was diagnosed with ADHD late last year the doctor suggested I read Dr Green's book, which I did, and she also suggested that I cut out some artificial colours, flavours and salicylates. She told me that salicylates are in cheese. I did this for about a week. Most of the food I had in my home was "no artificial colours" etc and avoiding cheese made no difference. The doctor didn't tell me that salicylates are mainly in fruit, she didn't tell me about 282, and she didn't give me any reference to your work or that of the RPAH diet. Therefore, I

thought my child was not a "foodie" (as I call her!) and gave it no further thought. My husband is dead against ADHD medication and basically my daughter got worse over the next six months until I was at breaking point with her behaviour at home, socially, and at school.

About 3 months ago, I went into a bookstore in desperation one day just looking for anything that would help me. I had been in tears for a week not knowing what else to do with her. I bought a copy of "Fed Up With ADHD" and I admit I didn't place much hope in it because of my previous experience. I read your book in a day and a half. The third page got my attention when you mentioned all the things food intolerance can be responsible for - handwriting, co-ordination, bowel control etc which are all things my daughter has been struggling with for years. She has never finished a task at school and she is in year 3. She is currently having occupational therapy for her co-ordination and she has always had bowel problems which are ongoing.

That week I took all my children off commercial bread and bought Bakers Delight which is the only bread I have bought since. I thought about two days later that my home was slightly calmer, but told myself that I was just looking for something. After three days I started my children on the diet, much to their total disgust! Within another three days I could see a difference in my daughter.

Since then, I have been having daily communication with her teachers and frequently the Principal, and although she is still quite slow and disorganised, her attitude is much better and she is not anywhere near as emotional as she was. She has gone from crying hysterically ten times a day to only having hysterics if she has eaten something wrong. I've established, unfortunately, that she is severely sensitive to salicylates, and even pears seem to make her a bit vague. While I am still struggling with this (I mean after all, how can a child not eat any fruit!!), I am learning what I can give her and when.

Basically, it is very hard work (which I realise you of all people know!), and a very big learning curve, but we're getting there. Everywhere I go now and mention it someone says something along the lines of "Oh yes, my friend has a sister who's done that and apparently the kid is like a different person". Sue, the word is spreading! I just wanted to say thank you for all the work and time and effort you have put in to this. Without your advice I would probably be on antidepressants by now. - Tracy, NSW

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More information

- [Fed Up](#) by Sue Dengate, Random House
- [Fed Up with Children's Behaviour DVD](#) by Sue Dengate
- The RPAH Elimination Diet Handbook with food & shopping guide 2009 available from www.allergy.net.au
- Our frequently updated "Salicylate Mistakes Information sheet" is available on request from suedengate@ozemail.com.au

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 find a supportive dietitian through the Dietitians Association of Australia www.daa.asn.au or write for our list of supportive dietitians (confodnet@ozemail.com.au)

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