

FOOD INTOLERANCE NETWORK FACTSHEET

Diet, sleep disturbance and insomnia

[The effects](#)

[The science](#)

[Which food chemicals?](#)

[Who is affected?](#)

[I think my sleep problems might be related to foods. What can I do?](#)

[Reader stories](#)

[Scientific references](#)

[Avoid these additives](#)

[More information](#)

The effects

- insomnia
- difficulty falling asleep
- frequent night waking
- waking up too early
- restless legs
- 'weird' or 'vivid' dreams
- nightmares
- night terrors
- sleep talking, sleep walking
- sleep apnoea

The science

Sleep disturbance, including difficulty settling to sleep and frequent night waking, is one of the main behavioural effects of artificial colours and other additives. People who are sensitive to additives may also be affected by some natural food chemicals including salicylates, amines and glutamates. See scientific references below.

Which food chemicals?

Reactions to food chemicals are a pharmacological - or food intolerance - reaction, not an allergic reaction to the proteins in foods.

The foods and food chemicals that can be associated with sleep disturbance include:

- Artificial colours, natural colour annatto, preservatives, synthetic antioxidants, flavour enhancers and flavours (more details below)
- Naturally occurring chemicals called salicylates, amines and glutamates
- Dairy foods are less likely to be a problem than additives and salicylates although dairy foods as well as the food chemicals above may be strongly implicated with stuffy/runny nose, snoring and sleep apnoea
- Wheat or gluten are less commonly a problem. However, wholegrain wheat in products such as wholemeal bread and cereals such as Weetbix are likely to be more of a problem than refined wheat products
- Sleep disturbance can also be the unintended side effects of the additives or active ingredients in medications, dental products and supplements.
- Some people are affected by VOCs – Volatile Organic Compounds – such as perfumes, fragranced toiletries e.g. hairspray and airfreshener, pesticides, household cleaners, renovation chemicals and especially chemicals such as flame retardants in new mattresses and pillows

Who is affected?

Anyone of any age can be affected. When whole families embark on their elimination diet to support a child with behaviour problem, it is common for them to report that everyone is sleeping better.

When an entire class of 6 years olds in the UK were asked to avoid additives for two weeks at school and at home, nearly 60% (two thirds) of them improved with regard to sleeping as well as behaviour and cooperation.

Food chemicals can pass through breastmilk to affect breastfed babies.

I think my sleep problems might be related to foods. What can I do?

People have different reactions to various food chemicals so any or all of the above food chemicals can cause the problem.

- Some people improve just by reducing their intake of additives or fruit (salicylates), see some of the reader stories below.
- I recommend you read my book Fed Up for a greater understanding of the chemicals – natural and artificial - in our food supply, the elimination diet and helpful recipes and support.
- If symptoms are serious enough to seek help, it is quicker and easier to do the 3 week elimination diet from RPA Allergy Clinic.
- You can email for our list of supportive dietitians: confoodnet@ozemail.com.au

Reader stories

From story [009] First whole night's sleep in seven years (April 1999)

In November 98 a friend gave me Sue Dengate's book Fed Up. I started the diet that day and on the first night of the elimination diet my two children slept through the night. That was the first whole night's sleep I had for nearly seven years.

[825] Weird dreams due to green food colouring (July 2009)

After I eat green food colouring, first it gets to my head. It confuses my brain and I can't get to sleep until 9 or half past 9 (usually I go to bed at 8 o'clock). That night I can't get to sleep and my mind is set on funny things and I have these weird dreams. In the morning I'm a big tired and miserable. – Six year old talking on our DVD

[824] Vivid dreams reduce on diet (July 2009)

For more than 20 years I had dreamt vividly and had woken each morning exhausted until I started on the diet and in the last couple of months I have had about 10% of the dreams I used to have. Shona, by email

[823] Salicylate dreams 'like war movie' (July 2009)

I started on failsafe ten years ago when I was a teenager. Salicylates are the worst for me. They cause what I call 'salicylate dreams'. They're like watching a war movie, and I am unable to stop it. – by email

From story [595] after two weeks on the diet he is asleep in 15 minutes (November 2007)

My husband and I watched a news program on the children at Nana Glen Primary School (a 2 week additive free trial organised by Sue & Howard Dengate similar to the Palmers Island school trial as seen on the Fed Up with Children's Behaviour DVD). We were so impressed we thought we'd try it with our two boys, aged 10 and 6. Both boys suffer with asthma and croup and both are very loud and active. Our oldest has always found it very hard to go to sleep, most nights he was still up at 11.30pm. We've tried various relaxing techniques, CDs, quiet reading and after two weeks on the diet he is asleep in 15 minutes. Fantastic!!!!

From story [474] goes to sleep and sleeps all night with no night terrors (November 2006)

My three-year-old son has been on the diet for three months now and it has been a miracle for our family. He has no eczema, his behaviour is fantastic (the sweet gentle caring child I knew was hiding in there somewhere), his faeces are back to normal, he has not had a runny nose since starting the diet, no abdominal pain and he goes to sleep and sleeps all night with no night terrors (we were dealing with three or four a night). WOW, what a difference. We have found he is sensitive to amines and salicylates

[617] Nearly crazy with fatigue and confusion –baby's insomnia (February 2008)

Since birth, my son Noah had trouble with sleep it didn't matter what I did or what time of day or night it was, it would always take him at least 2 hours to get to sleep, and then if I put him down in his cot, he would wake 10 minutes later screaming. Then it would take another 2 hours of pacing the dark hallways before he'd doze off again. In the end, I spent the first 12 months of Noah's life

sleeping in the rocking chair with him, just so he would sleep. I nearly went crazy with fatigue and confusion. I tried everything I (and everyone around me) could think of.

In the end, I insisted that there was something going on because the times he wasn't crying, I could see that he really had a very social, gentle and loving nature that was at odds with the furious, red screaming insomniac he was the rest of the time! He was breastfed and everything got much worse when I introduced solids. I was advised by a homeopath to stop eating dairy and give him slippery elm powder to help settle his guts. Everything got so much worse after that. The only thing he could have been reacting to in the slippery elm was salicylates so she put me on a low-salicylate diet. Noah improved but I didn't take it fully seriously I was naughty a lot! I continued drinking coffee and some other things like that. Finally, when Noah was 18 months old, I discovered your website. It changed my entire life, and you will never truly know how indebted I am to you for the work you do. – Alison, Qld

[822] Lying awake half the night from megavitamins (July 2009)

I am a 68 year-old with no health problems except the beginning of muscular stiffness. I'd like to know if [a certain all natural megavitamin supplement with bioflavonoids and strong fruit extracts] contains any additives not noted on the labels. I honestly cannot note any difference except that my sleep pattern has changed. Previously a 'go to bed and drop off' person I now find myself either lying awake half the night or going to sleep and waking in the small hours of the morning—from Questions in Failsafe Newsletter #59 . (It is common for natural vitamins especially when chewable to contain very strong fruit extracts that can cause this kind of salicylate reaction. In a similar report to the same supplements a mother wrote: 'all four kids reacted for a week - silly jumping around, wouldn't listen, couldn't concentrate, fighting with each other - the little ones were the worst - I couldn't believe it, just from one tiny little pill')

[821] Snoring and sleep apnoea due to foods and new mattress (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. – from Failsafe Newsletter #1. See <http://www.chem-tox.com/beds/frame-beds.htm> for hundreds of reports of health problems mostly in adults due to chemicals in new mattresses.

[616] Getting to sleep was a major problem - additives (February 2008)

I have had my 7 year-old daughter on an additive free diet (eliminating colours, preservatives, flavour enhancers and synthetic antioxidants) for one week and I cannot thank you enough. I have got my beautiful girl back. Looking back now I can see that she has probably always been intolerant of additives. The dramatic change in her in nothing short of amazing. Getting to sleep was always a major problem. Extremely emotional outbursts were constant, this is only to mention a couple of problems we were dealing with. The last two nights she has fallen to sleep within 20 minutes of going to bed. It used to take anything up to 2 and a half hours (frustrating for both of us). This morning I was able to brush her hair without tears for the first time in her life.

Two months later ... She is still going along really well and we have been able to add back some food back into her diet. The main ones she had reacted to are orange flavour and Twisties and any take-away food along the lines of McDonalds burgers or Hungry Jacks.- Kerri, by email

[820] Sleepwalking from synthetic antioxidants (July 2009)

We'd been failsafe for several years when we ate some hot chips (BHA 320) several times while on a holiday. My son's sleep talking and sleep walking which had stopped on the diet came back again the nights we had chips. – by email See also Failsafe Story [596]

From story [596] Nightmares and trouble going to sleep and staying asleep (November 2007)

In this painstakingly recorded case of a full elimination diet case, nightmares and sleep disturbance were related to synthetic antioxidants (310-312, 319-321)

[647] Can't believe the house is so silent (May 2008)

After only 2 weeks of making a thin edge of the wedge start on failsafe, we are seeing drastic improvements in our 4.5yr son, 2.75 son and 1yr old daughter, and me too. No rages, no nightmares, easy to bed, sleeping all night till a reasonable time and no 5pm meltdowns. My mother visited for the first time in about seven weeks – she is interstate - and couldn't believe her eyes. The conflict between the boys - normal! - is short lived and resolved mostly unassisted and she said that she thought they were great kids who simply got tired and a-copic (my son, 4.5 - he is so articulate - would sometimes scream 'I don't know why I am upset, I have run out of coping today.') in the late afternoon. Now we know that a fabulous salicylate platter - I mean fruit platter! - every afternoon was just stacking the deck against them. My 3pm to 7pm is now very nice indeed and at 7.05 my husband and I look at each other with all 3 of them asleep in bed and can't quite believe that the house is silent. Thank you for battling to make this information accessible to us all. We are grateful - Becc, NSW

[146] Restless babies from tartrazine (yellow#5, colour 102) (February 2002)

"Thank you so much for the "Restless Babies" article (available on website) I recommended it to a distraught mum in the USA via a breastfeeding support bulletin board. She was shocked to discover that the artificial yellow colour tartrazine was hiding in many 'healthy' foods. Within just two days of changing her diet, her baby had a normal sleeping pattern. Not only that, but her two-year-old 'spirited kid' is much calmer, and has stopped throwing incessant tantrums. Other board members have benefited from the article, including one mum who recognised the frothy 'cappuccino' poops mentioned. She had asked her pediatrician about it, but he had no idea what caused it. Changing her diet to exclude tartrazine cured both the frothy poops and the night waking." – from a breastfeeding counsellor

Here are the foods that the USA mother was surprised to find tartrazine in: potato bread, yoghurt, canned soup, margarine and cough syrup. She was also eating, and feeding her two year old, cakes/cake mixes/donuts/muffins/snack cakes, ice-cream, cookies and crackers, drink mixes, lemonade, pudding mix, boxed meals, rice and pasta dishes, cheesecake, butterscotch candy, jelly and chips all containing this harmful additive.

[366] "My babies woke up 8 times every night" (March 2005)

A friend gave me your book "Fed up" to read and I simply can't believe the difference it has made to our lives. I have four children. Three of them have been terrible sleepers right from birth. I have spent a week at Tresillian house with my 3rd child, where he was handed back to me at the end of the week unchanged. My babies all woke up on average 8 times every night and I have been so sleep deprived over the past 8 years that I became postnatal. I have a Degree in Early Childhood and have worked as a Director in a Pre-School for many years, and thought that I could control their behaviour by employing techniques acquired through professional training. It

was frustrating to find that I couldn't cope. My first child was such a shock! I simply couldn't leave the house with him.

This book came in time for my 4th and final child. My daughter fell into the same terrible broken night sleep pattern as the others. After struggling for 8 months, she did start to settle down, waking perhaps once a night. This was great until I started her, at age 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 she was having had 282 in it. SO we stopped feeding it to her. Within a couple of nights 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!

My question to you regards my children when they were babies, constantly struggling to sleep - could this additive (calcium propionate, 282) have been passed on to the baby through my breastmilk, causing a similar reaction??? – by email [The answer: YES, food chemicals are passed through breastmilk, see also little Christopher and the bread preservative on our DVD – Sue]

[363] “Sleep apnoea, incessant snorting and inability to breathe at night” (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 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

[131] We just love the effects of the diet (December 2001)

"We have recently gone onto a fairly strict version of the elimination diet - and have seen fantastic results in our 4 year old son. He is sleeping better, has become very loving and affectionate with his father, more agreeable, less tense and generally calmer and more 'angelic'. We just love it. The hardest part was just getting used to what foods were safe and allowed."- reader, email

[819] Night terrors gone in two weeks on diet (July 2009)

"My sister's 3 yo son suffers from night terrors. He is a bright, happy boy during the day but his constant inconsolable screaming at night is distressing. He eats large amounts of fresh fruit and vegies.

3 weeks later: "My sister cannot believe the difference. She is making everything failsafe. Her son has had his first week in more than two years, without waking, screaming etc." – by email

[390] “I was angry because I couldn't fall asleep” (March 2006)

My 6 ½ year old son, Tim (not his real name) is currently undergoing investigation of mixed depressive disorder with anxiety and obsessive ruminations. We have used the failsafe diet in the past with one of our other children, but had not ever thought of foods being linked to Tim's mood problems. When you mention the “gifted and depressed” child in your recent talk my ears immediately pricked up and took note. Tim has been identified as highly gifted and everyone has been saying that is the cause of his problems but I have always felt there was something else

underlying that was contributing. We will be contacting our GP today and hopefully starting the failsafe diet ASAP...

Two months later ... Since starting the elimination diet Tim has not self harmed once! He is much calmer and has noticed this in himself. He no longer seems to be as restless and has been falling asleep easily at a reasonable time in the evenings. We started with the salicylates challenge this week and there seemed to be no reaction, until day 5/6 when we started to notice his behaviour was getting worse. We will stop this challenge tonight and wait to try some other groups. His GP and Clinical Psychologist are both thrilled with the change as are well!

One week laterAfter I emailed you we finally had the BIG reaction we were looking for. It happened on Day 7 of the salicylate challenge - we had already stopped the challenge that morning. Tim went to bed as normal then began to write swear words all over his bed, his sheets and his body. ("I was angry with you because I couldn't fall asleep") This is the behaviour and obsessive ruminations this poor boy was experiencing on a daily basis before. - WA

[379] Sleep and behaviour problems due to hairspray, airfreshener (November 2005)

I stopped wearing hairspray about 6 months ago when we went totally failsafe and saw great results with our children's behaviour. Two weeks ago I was going out without the kids, so after putting them to bed I sprayed on some Sunsilks hairspray and liked the way it looked. So the next day I did it again and within a couple of hours my 3 year old son's behaviour changed. He was overactive, very fidgety, hitting and kicking, and headbutted his sister hard enough to give her a blood nose. As time went on he was crying a lot with loud silly behaviour and wanting demands met immediately. That night he could not get to sleep. I wore the hairspray for three days not putting two and two together then we realized it must be the hairspray as their diet is so failsafe it couldn't be the food he was eating. I stopped wearing hairspray and his behaviour returned to normal. I have also noticed that when I visit my mum who uses airfreshener - lots of air freshener - my son's behaviour deteriorates after a few hours. - Vic

[125] (restless legs) (September 2001)

Around February of 2000 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 too 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 millennium ... 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

[818] Apnoea, Alzheimers and asthma (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

[817] Nose full of swollen tissue – now sleeping better (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 621-635 and 160b and are looking at 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

[816] 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! (included on the Rhinitis factsheet because rhinitis can contribute to snoring)

[815] 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! (included on the Rhinitis factsheet because rhinitis can contribute to snoring)

[216] "Had to walk out of the house" (October 2002)

My daughter is 3.5 years old. Last year when she was 2 years old she had two nights where she only slept for 2 hours, and was a flailing, intolerable child. I literally had to walk out of the house, I was very close to losing it. I realised that this reaction was likely caused by the 'party foods' she had eaten for the first time at a playgroup Christmas party. I took her to the doctor, and was then referred to a paediatrician, and then onto a child psychologist. The psychologist agreed that her diet needed to be taken into account, as she was a very busy little girl, who never stopped, and never slept much. But the sudden outburst of defiance had me worried. He gave us practical

advice, and we went on our way. Six months ago, a friend gave me your book 'Fed Up'. During the first two weeks of the elimination diet, our little devil turned into an angel ... - by email

[150] "I have spent the better part of my adult life wanting to sleep" (April 2002)

I have been an insomniac since I was 16. From my mid 20s it has been a major issue in my life. I have lived on approximately four hours sleep a day. I have spent thousands of dollars in trying to find the answer. I have seen naturopaths, homeopaths, medical doctors, Chinese herbalists, acupuncturists. I have been to a sleep centre where they tried to teach me to sleep. I have tried every imaginable trick to try to sleep. For three years, I stopped drinking or eating anything with caffeine. I would drink warm milk before bed. I would take a run before bed. I would read a book before bed. Have a bath before bed. You name it, I have probably tried it. By the time I turned 30, I decided that I had to learn to accept my insomnia - 'this is as good as it gets' sort of thing. In the worst scenario I would read till all hours of the morning. Having said that, I had to also accept the fact that I was tired most of the time.

I had my son at the age of 31. He was a colicky baby, a terrible sleeper. He also had heartburn at night, which his paediatrician attributed to the fact that my son still breast fed at night, up to the age of 25 months. I never understood the relationship between breastfeeding at night and heartburn, so continued doing it. My main resource and my inability to accept my paed's advice was due to my own travels to primitive cultures, where I saw babies and toddlers breastfeeding constantly; 24/7 days a week and these babies were NOT colicky, did not suffer heartburn. In fact, they seemed very happy, content, and rarely cried. When they did cry, it was more of a whimper rather than the cries I hear in western society.

Being a 30 something Mum, I also was fully aware of what sort of Mum I wanted to be. I had clear visions of being a compassionate Mum; this entailed no spanking, no yelling, but rather validating feelings, finding alternatives whereby both of us would be happy, and in the worst scenario just accepting that my child and I would not always agree, but I would still respect this difference rather than fight it. My son's temperament, however, tested me to the core and I failed often in living my maternal visions. Yes, I have yelled at my son, yes I have spanked him (to date, three times - he is 2.5 years old and each time I think about it, I do cringe with disappointment with the evidence of my weaknesses). My son, from an early age was high need and wanted full on hands on care, was constantly on the breast, slow to unwind, wanted in-your-face attention, constantly in my arms. In a nutshell I found him draining, and highly strung. I remember when he was only five months old, having this real desire just to throw him across the room and the reality of my feelings shocked me to my core. I am by nature sensitive to other people's feelings, gentle, gracious, etc.

I took him to a sleep centre, where the staff tried to teach me to help my son to fall asleep on his own and all I kept thinking about was "seen this movie before". I thought I was going insane; my son took two hours to unwind before he would fall asleep and when he did, he would sleep only for one hour, waking up and then would demand the breast to go to sleep again. After the sleep centre experience with my son, I decided to go by my instincts; one thing I was sure about was that I would never let my son cry it out, no matter what. Part of my reasoning stemmed from 'what if he has the same problems as me? Maybe its genetics?' another real reason for me was 'he must be waking up for some reason?'...to my mind, it may be hard to fall asleep, but once asleep, a person wakes up for a reason...so I decided that if my son woke up every hour, I would just learn to live with that too and together we would get through it. I put up with it literally till my son was 25 months old and by that stage, I am sure the night nursing was more a habit rather than a real need, ie, whatever was causing the night waking as an infant/baby, no longer existed by the time he was a toddler.

He was a very active little boy, who seemed too busy to sit for any period of time. His thoughts also were busy, talking constantly without taking a breath. As a result, he always looked like he was misbehaving because he seemed to have no physical self control, although he was very gentle, loving and extremely aware of the needs of others. But then, he would all of a sudden display vocal aggression, and physical aggression, seeming to get pleasure in hurting. I could not understand this Jekyll and Hyde personality.

Most people that I turned to, either suggested more discipline, in the forms of spanking or severe punishment. Others suggested that I was giving him too many sweets. Others suggested that I train him at home, for instance sitting with him for ten minutes today, then fifteen minutes tomorrow. Others suggested that my son and I were too attached and he was playing on my weaknesses. Others implied that I was not a consistent mother regarding discipline. But I saw my son for the person he was. I had these real glimpses of his real personality. I thought about taking him to a naturopath or a homeopath. I resisted though because my real fear was that his behaviour would become an issue in our life like my sleeping disorder became an issue in my life. Again, I turned to my own common sense here and decided that I preferred to accept the package rather than fight it all the time. Then I stumbled on your book at a health shop and bought it.

I have only read probably one quarter of your book. But the next day I eliminated wheat, dairy and all preservatives/additives. Within two days, the son that I only had glimpses of suddenly emerged for a period of five consecutive days ... and I suddenly found myself able to fall asleep in ten minutes. My son would still wake up, and I would still respond in the same manner, but again, I would be able to fall asleep without any problems. Day six was the day that I cried. I have spent the better part of my adult life wanting to sleep and feeling tired. I have wasted years of my youth thinking about sleep. I am at times angry and at times relieved to just get out of the woods. I just can not believe that I no longer have to describe myself as an insomniac.

My son now sleeps much better, but I have realized only today that I think he is also salicylate sensitive and probably so am I. Both of us, I realize now, demonstrate aggression for unknown reasons. I can control that side of me because I am an adult, but my son is more honest with himself and his world.

Today, my son was pushed over the edge, so tomorrow, I am getting stricter with salicylate and amine side of the challenges - but I feel good about it. I know where I am going now, I have direction and that my undisciplined boy does not need more discipline. In fact in the five days that he was his real self, I had absolutely no problems. There was such harmony between us that my heart upon just writing that, is swelling up ... more importantly, it has nothing to do with my adequacies as a mother, or my son's personality. It is all external to the problem. This makes me feel more confident than ever ...

I wanted to tell you my story and to thank you from the bottom of my heart. If only someone had told me at 16 what was causing my insomnia ... but then, I also know that my insomnia stopped me from resorting to ignoring my son's cries and if I was not going to find the motive of his behaviour and cries, I was just going to accept this boy as he was ... for better or worse ...

I have learned one thing in life and that is, that it is the worse situations that are character building and through them I can choose the path I decide to tread ... I am just happy that you wrote your book 'Fed up' and I am just happy that I chose to read it ... thanking you very very much ... -
Ingrid, Melbourne

Scientific references

See abstracts for the papers below in www.pubmed.com

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Avoid these additives

ARTIFICIAL COLOURS

102 tartrazine, 104 quinoline yellow, 110 sunset yellow, 122 azorubine, 123 amaranth, 124 ponceau red, 127 erythrosine, 129 allura red, 132 indigotine, 133 brilliant blue, 142 green S, 143 Fast Green FCF, 151 brilliant black, 155 chocolate brown

NATURAL COLOUR

160b annatto

PRESERVATIVES

200-203 sorbates (in margarine, dips, cakes, fruit products)
210-213 benzoates (in juices, soft drinks, cordials, syrups)
220-228 sulphites (in dried fruit, fruit drinks, sausages, and others)
280-283 propionates (in bread, crumpets, bakery products)
249-252 nitrates, nitrites (in processed meats like ham)

ANTIOXIDANTS - synthetic antioxidants in vegetable oils and margarines

310-312 Gallates

319-320 TBHQ, BHA, BHT

FLAVOUR ENHANCERS

621 MSG (in tasty foods, fast foods, snack foods)

627, 631, 635 disodium inosinate, disodium guanylate, ribonucleotides (can be associated with itchy skin rashes)

HVP HPP hydrolysed/formulated vegetable/soy/wheat/plant protein, yeast, yeast extract, broth

ADDED FLAVOURS - there are thousands of artificial flavours which don't have to be identified by number because they are considered to be trade secrets. Flavours may contain unlisted artificial colours and preservatives.

More information

People have different reactions to various food chemicals so any or all of the above food chemicals can cause the problem.

I do recommend my book Fed Up for a greater understanding of the chemicals in our food, the elimination diet, support and helpful recipes.

If reducing your intake of nasty additives doesn't help, it may be worth doing a full elimination diet to find the cause of the problem. You can email for our list of supportive dietitians:

confoodnet@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 (confoodnet@ozemail.com.au)

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