

## Frequently Asked Questions

Collected here are some of the interesting questions concerning the diet and the effects of food on health, behaviour and learning, with the most recent at the top. There's a wealth of useful information to be found by scrolling, reading or searching (you can search for symptoms, foods etc by using your search function, usually Control+F). Some of the information, particularly that about specific foods and what they contain, may be out of date – always check the Product Updates section on [www.fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au) for the latest information.

If you want a question answered, please email me on [suedengate@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suedengate@ozemail.com.au). My mailing address is PO Box 718, Woolgoolga NSW 2456, Australia.

*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](http://www.daa.asn.au) or write for our list of supportive dietitians ([confodnet@ozemail.com.au](mailto:confodnet@ozemail.com.au))*

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### (November 2006)

**Q: I have heard that the US National Academy of Sciences concluded in 2002 that the only safe intake of trans fats is zero, and that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended that governments phase out partially hydrogenated oils. In Australia, are trans fatty acids identified on food labels? Is our government taking action to reduce trans fatty acids in food?**

**A:** Trans fatty acid contents must be declared if a nutrition claim is made in respect of cholesterol or saturated, trans, polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fatty acids; or omega-3, omega-6 or omega-9 fatty acids. Some food manufacturers voluntarily list the amount of trans fatty acids in their products. FSANZ is proposing to allow manufacturers to use a claim that a food 'low in trans fatty acids and saturated fat can reduce the risk of heart disease' when they introduce a new regulation on health claims on foods in 2007. This will assist consumers to make healthier choices and encourage the food industry to develop healthier products.

The Australian Government has also set up a National Collaboration on Trans Fats that includes representatives from the Australian National Heart Foundation, the Australian Food and Grocery Council, the Dietitians Association of Australia and FSANZ. The primary aim of this group is to work cooperatively in reducing the amount of trans fatty acids in the Australian food supply without an associated increase in the amount of saturated fat. The group will promote wide implementation of current industry and public health initiatives for reducing the levels of trans fatty acids and increasing consumer awareness and understanding.  
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/factsheets2006/transfattyacids24oct3388.cfm>

**Q. I know that failsafe eating is meant to help with PMT, but my almost 15 year old daughter who has had monthly cramps but no period for 4 years suddenly got her period. We have been on the elimination diet for 3 weeks. Is this a coincidence?**

**A.** As well as an improvement in PMT, failsafe women have reported reductions in period pain, postnatal depression and clots during menstrual bleeding. There have also been several reports of overcoming infertility - in other words, a pregnancy within months of starting failsafe after years of trying. So your daughter's experience is possibly not a coincidence. We'd love to hear of any similar reports (email [suedengate@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suedengate@ozemail.com.au)).

**Q. My daughter's skin prick tests show a moderate allergy to cows milk and we have trialled soymilk several times but it makes her depressed, intrusive, argumentative and very negative (feels the whole world is against her). She seems totally unaware of this occurring, even when pointed out. Is this a reaction you are aware of?**

**A.** Some children do have behavioural reactions to soy milk. We would like to hear from anyone else who has experienced soy-related depression. ([suedengate@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suedengate@ozemail.com.au))

**Q. My 18yo son has been a failsafer for 8 years now and has always been excellent with his diet. We recently had a very upsetting time when over a period of months he deteriorated into an angry, swearing, depressed young man. The cause turned out to be that an avid gym goer, he was taking Musashi Protein food (powder) mixed with water, every single morning after going to the gym to build himself up and as an additional protein source. The ingredients included, amongst other things, a couple of flavour enhancers, although not numbered. Would full cream canned milk powder or Sustagen be an alternative for him to take? He says he needs to get the extra protein but obviously can't cook himself up a meal as he goes straight to work from the gym so something he can mix with water like he did with the protein powder would be ideal.**

**A.** If he can tolerate dairy foods, milk powder or Sustagen is okay. Pure egg white powder is another alternative you can sometimes find amongst body building supplies, it goes well in a milk or soyshake.

**Q. Can you tell me what sort of cooking oil I should use to avoid macular degeneration (AMD)?**

**A.** A recent review in the Medical Journal of Australia found that the evidence regarding dietary fats and AMD is conflicting regarding saturated, polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats; that three out of nine studies found a diet rich in dark green or yellow vegetables helpful; that the only proven modifiable risk factor for AMD is smoking; and that a low fat healthy diet with vegetables is probably a good idea. See the full details at [http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/184\\_09\\_010506/guy11072\\_fm.html](http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/184_09_010506/guy11072_fm.html).

**Q. Can pool chlorine affect children's behaviour?**

**A.** Yes! This is a common problem every summer when schools start the swimming programs, see story number [466], Swimming pool chlorine triggers oppositional defiance.

**Q. We've been meaning to do a dairy challenge but there always seems to be a reason not to.**

**A.** From the beginning of January and right through first term is usually an excellent time to do challenges because the party season is over.

**Q. My oppositionally defiant amine-sensitive daughter is having a hard time at the moment and I am wondering if it might be due to spring flowers?**

**A.** It is well known that salicylate responders can be affected by the scent of flowers and plant products such as bark, potpourri, essential oils and incense and a salicylate-sensitive failsafer from New Zealand has commented that Australian natives seem to be particularly strong. What about amines? We would welcome feedback from amine responders on this topic ([suedengate@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suedengate@ozemail.com.au)).

**Q. My daughter has had severe reactions to cochineal pink colour (120) in a strawberry milkshake and some sweets. The reaction seems to occur within minutes and presents as a significant rash from the part way up the nose across the face to the jaw line. She gets significant swelling, although no breathing symptoms. Why is this not in your banned list?**

**A.** Reactions to cochineal (120) are true allergic reactions to proteins in the cochineal which is made from crushed beetles. As such, they are quick and easy to identify - which is what you have found. The treatment for true allergies like this is avoidance of the allergen. Allergy to cochineal is quite rare whereas the additives on our banned list cause a very wide range of intolerance reactions in large numbers of consumers. Unlike allergies, intolerance reactions are usually delayed and can be difficult to identify except through the use of an elimination diet. (Further reading: Chung K and others, Identification of carmine allergens among three carmine allergy patients. Allergy. 2001 Jan;56(1):73-7, abstract on [www.pubmed.com](http://www.pubmed.com))

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**(August 2006)**

**Q: I see there have been food recalls and publicity in UK about the carcinogen Sudan 1 in artificial colour Sunset Yellow 110 and in some foods. What's happening in Australia?**

**A:** If a change is made in international specifications for an additive, which usually takes years through a committee known as JECFA, then the new specification will be picked up when the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code is amended and updated.. For instance, the permitted level of lead in sunset yellow (110) has just been reduced from 10 to 2 mg/kg. Not that any of us are eating such stuff.

**Q: I have found a commercial bread, at a good price, made of unbleached flour but it contains 282. The ones I can find without 282 contain bleached flour. What is your opinion - which is worse ?**

**A:** 282 is worse. The Bread Research Institute in Sydney confirmed that there is no bleached flour produced or sold in Australia, nor is there permission for it. The only exception is in commercial sponge flour, which you can't buy as a flour at the retail level. If you buy a cooked sponge cake there is a small chance that the flour will have been bleached to stabilise the protein so the sponge doesn't collapse. A lot of the claims on websites for bleaching of flour relate to US flours, which are made from red wheats which may be bleached to give a whiter appearance.

**Q. For at least 2 years now I have constantly suffered from reflux and could never work out what was the common ingredient. After seeing the 635 TV segment I found that 635 was a common element in the foods in our cupboard. As an experiment I stopped eating foods that contained it and after two days the reflux disappeared. About three weeks later I suffered another bout of bad reflux and looked at what had changed. That night I had eaten some BBQ chips that contained, you guessed it, 635. Are there other people for whom 635 has had this effect?**

**A.** Yes! People react differently to food chemicals so any food chemical can cause any reaction. While 635 is often associated with itchy rashes, it can also be associated with any other food intolerance symptoms including reflux and children's behaviour. On our DVD, one woman talks about itchy rashes, swelling of the lips and tongue and extremely painful spasms of the oesophagus due to 635. "I thought I was going to die," she says. Although food regulators claim consumers are protected by food additive labelling, in our experience both consumers and their health care providers are usually unaware of the effects of food additives, resulting in years of unnecessary pain and medication.

**Q. Is it possible that fish oil could have caused an increase in my Aspergers son's behaviour problems? It may purely coincidence but it appears that his behaviour seriously deteriorated when we started giving him the fish oil and it improved (or rather went back to what it was before the fish oil) a couple of days after we stopped giving it to him.**

**A.** Fish oil is thought to benefit about 30 per cent of children with learning or behaviour problems. Others can be badly affected due to the presence of natural salicylates (in ingredients such as thyme oil, evening primrose oil and lemon or lime flavouring) and natural amines in fish oils. Failsafers have reported adverse reactions including behaviour problems, depression and migraines to a range of fish oil products. See below for reader reports regarding children's reactions. Some families do a fish oil challenge for a week or more while keeping a careful food and symptom diary - at the end of the time, parents can review the diary and decide whether their child is better or worse. For more details and reader reports regarding the fish oil's claims to be salicylate and amine free, and some children's reactions, see the new factsheet: [Fish oils, Vitamins and Vegetables](#).

**Q. With depression etc at record highs, I'm just wondering if anyone has done a study on tartrazine (colour 102) and its effects on emotions, more specifically, depression. I have been challenging things from my seven year old daughter's diet. Yesterday we had some fruit mentos and afterwards she was teary, her eyes were purple and red and blotchy. As for me I felt suddenly stressed and angry. This lasted about 1/2 hour for me and about 1 hour for her.**

**A.** The link between food chemicals and depression is generally not recognized by the medical profession, and there is only a little research about it, see the [Depression factsheet](#) on our website and also the [Sleep Disturbance factsheet](#). Most of the studies on food colours have concerned hyperactivity but food chemicals including artificial colours and salicylates can affect people in different ways. Some children may become hyperactive, loud or aggressive after exposure to artificial colours or salicylates while others may become quiet, inattentive, tearful or anxious. Effects of food chemicals can change with age, so that children who react with hyperactivity in primary school may react with depression in high school. If they are eating food chemicals that affect them all the time, the condition will appear to be chronic as reported in the Parker and Watkins 2003 paper described in the depression factsheet. This issue is so overlooked that medications for depression are coloured with artificial colours!

**Q. My sister says I should take my kids to Advanced Allergy Elimination (AAE) to get them desensitized. Can you tell me if that works?**

**A.** There is no scientific basis for AAE and it can be very expensive. Some people say it has helped them. Others say it hasn't.

**Q. Is home brand OK for soy drink, wheat bix, rice bubbles and 2 minute noodles (the ingredients say wheat flour, vegetable oil (palm) water and salt?)**

**A.** Read the labels carefully. Some home brand products are OK but if you buy a product that contains any vegetable oil (that includes 2 minute noodles or soy drink), it probably contains unlisted antioxidants like BHA (320) in the vegetable oil. It is impossible for us to get accurate information about legally unlisted antioxidants in vegetable oils in homebrand products so we don't recommend them.

**Q. We have been through the RPA elimination diet but my three year old did not fit the mould. She has major reactions to anything orange or yellow such as corn, pumpkin, apricots, citrus fruits, pineapple, egg, etc Her reactions occur almost instantly at the slightest amount of any of the above – there is no build up. It is enough to use the same spoon to serve peas as carrots to give her a reaction.**

**A.** I can't find anything in the medical literature about allergy or intolerance to beta-carotene but you are not the first to report this problem. I would like to hear from anyone else who thinks they may have a sensitivity to this food chemical. (email [confoodnet@ozemail.com.au](mailto:confoodnet@ozemail.com.au))

**Q. My son had a severe outbreak of hives while taking Robitussin ME for a cough. The doctor was surprised with the reaction to the Robitussin, but as soon as we discontinued using the product the hives went away.**

**A.** This is the second report of severe reactions to Robitussin ME we have received, so it is worth reporting it - the Adverse Events Medications Hotline ceased to exist from June 2006, due to lack of funding but the Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee can be contacted with reports of reactions. Although this is technically not their role, they are apparently very concerned about the situation and will take note of any reports. ADRAC phone 1800 044 114.

**Q. I saw a dietician but she seemed quite vague about it and I got a lot more information from your site than she gave me anyway. I really need to see a good dietician so any recommendations would be appreciated.**

**A.** We receive a lot of feedback like this. Our list of supportive dietitians is available on request from [confoodnet@ozemail.com.au](mailto:confoodnet@ozemail.com.au). If you are prepared to travel, ask for one of our miracle workers, a small group of dietitians who are very experienced and talented. If you see someone who is less than helpful, please give us the name so we can warn others. Dietitians in hospitals and community health centres are free, some are helpful, some are not. There are some good free dietitians on our list. To find a private dietitian, you can go to the dietitians' website [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au), click on Find an APD, choose Allergy and Food Sensitivity (under Area of Practice), and your suburb or state as your search terms, then look for anyone near you - and let us know what you think of them! The best way to judge a dietitian is to ask them how many years experience they have in supervising the RPA elimination diet.

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**(May 2006)**

**Q. I am wondering if you can tell me what food groups aggravate arthritis as my father is suffering from arthritis in his feet. He has already noticed that when he eats tomatoes and also dark chocolate, his feet are a lot worse for the next few days.**

**A.** Salicylates, amines, additives, dairy and wheat – any or all can affect arthritis. Suspect salicylates first. Tomatoes contain both salicylates and amines, chocolate contains only amines, so it could be both affecting him or only amines – also in cheese, wine, tinned or frozen fish, broccoli, tomatoes, bananas, mushrooms and many others.

**Q. I have read your books, which have been terrific! I have applied your facts to my own children and I am forever getting credit for their good behaviour, many thanks to you!! I was wondering if you have yet got a DVD out. I know a lot of friends that would take the time to watch a DVD rather than sit and read a book!**

**A.** Thanks for asking - yes we have, it was released on 1 May 2006, see some very positive reader comments in One Liners. Details on [www.fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au)

(our new easy to spell website name).

**Q. I was also wondering if you are going to do a talk in Ballina or Lismore soon?**

**A.** No, after Grafton and Coffs Harbour I won't be doing any more talks until next year - I have to stop talking and start writing to get my books back on the shelves. But you can buy the DVD through the website, it is better than the talks in my opinion.

**Q. Since we have been buying bread without preservative 282, we have seen a huge difference in our 6 year old son (we have also been avoiding other preservatives). However, up until now, we have only bought Brumbys's. Two weeks ago, I noticed that Wonder White was now free of preservatives. Two weeks on and two weeks of absolutely nightmarish behaviour has forced me to change back to Brumbys. Our son has not had Wonder White for three days now, and everything has really calmed down again. What are your thoughts? Other than this bread, there has been no other change to his diet that I believe could explain this. When we switched to preservative free bread last year, within a week my son's behaviour had changed so much we were astounded. The last two weeks felt like we were back where we started - but it took that long to realise what it was! ...**

**A.** Most supermarket breads that advertise "free of artificial preservatives" use vinegar as a preservative instead. Many children whose behaviour is affected by additives are also affected by natural food chemicals called salicylates and amines, and vinegar contains high amounts of these, so you are better off sticking to Brumbys or Bakers Delight breads, or looking for breads with no preservatives, vinegar, antioxidant 320 or whey powder (that's another source of problems in bread). You would probably find your son would improve even more on a trial of the low chemical elimination diet (free of additives, low in salicylates, amines and flavour enhancers).

**Q. I'm trying to track the cause of a persistent skin rash in my 2 year old son. Are Brumbys' sausage rolls OK?**

**A.** No! We recommend ONLY the plain breads and the white iced finger buns at Brumbys – nothing else. Beware: the plain white iced cup cakes that look failsafe are preservative free, but contain sunset yellow (110) artificial colour. And the sausage rolls are a disaster area. In North Queensland, sausage rolls sold in Brumbys contain 8 nasty additives: artificial colours 102 and 124, annatto colour 160b, potassium sorbate 202, sodium metabisulphite 223, synthetic antioxidant BHT 321, flavour enhancers 621 and 631. For skin rashes I would suspect 631 first (a nucleotide flavour enhancer, see Ribo Rash factsheet), but any of these could cause a skin rash – or behaviour problems, or asthma.

**Q. When my son was getting ready to go failsafe, he ate sausages one time and hot chips another and reacted to both hours later with exercise induced asthma. Do these foods have an additive in common?**

**A.** Sausages and hot chips are classic sources of sulphite preservatives (220-228), the additive most likely to be associated with asthma. See Papazian article for an FDA article about sulphites in French fries, describing a quick, obvious reaction. It is less well understood that sulphites can cause irritated airways with no obvious symptoms until combined with exposure to an environmental trigger such as exercise – and it can happen hours or even days later. Further reading: Sulfites: Safe for Most, Dangerous for Some by Ruth Papazian (do a google search for free full text), and see the full story in Reader Stories. The child in the question went on to win his school cross country race while failsafe with 'no asthmatic reactions at all afterwards or during, whilst plenty of kids were, in his words, "dropping like flies with asthma attacks all around him" - some quite seriously so! Of course, as usual, the school had a sausage sizzle going all that day to raise money - bizarre isn't it?'

**Q. Is there any research on nitrates entering the food chain through water? I have noticed in intensive farming areas of northern France that they no longer drink the local water because one will become violently ill after three days. This is due to the high nitrate input when producing maize in the area. I have also noticed in the same area that the incidence of teenage problems from suicide to poor exam results to excessive drink and drug problems are a major puzzle for the adults. This is an area where they do not agreed with fizzy drinks or sweets and bake their own bread.**

**A.** Contamination of ground water by nitrates from agricultural fertilizers is a common, well documented and increasing problem. Nitrates are transformed into nitrites in the GI tract and can be fatal to infants when the water is used to make up baby formulas. There are also concerns about cancer risks but there has been very little research concerning other health risks and none regarding behavioural effects on children. Yet another reason to drink filtered or bottled water. *Further reading: Kumar S and others, Need for revision of nitrates standards for drinking water: a case study of Rajasthan. Indian J Environ Health. 2002;44(2):168-72; Kozliuk AS and others, Immunologic status of children living in a region with an increased level of nitrates in the drinking water, Gig Sanit. 1989 ;(3):19-22. Abstracts available at [www.pubmed.com](http://www.pubmed.com)*

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**(March 2006)**

**Q. I was wondering if the product from Healtheries Kids Care Rice Wheels are failsafe - in the ingredients list it includes something stated as Barbecue flavour (natural and nature identical flavouring substances). I wondered if this was an attempt to hide anything sinister.**

**A.** As journalist Eric Schlosser says in his book Fast Food Nation, 'Natural and artificial flavours are now manufactured at the same chemical plants ...calling any of these flavours "natural" requires a flexible attitude'. The ingredients in added flavours don't have to be listed because they are trade secrets. Under the 5% labeling loophole, flavours can contain unlisted artificial colours and preservatives, so I suppose the word 'natural' protects you from those but you can work out what barbecue flavour might contain from a barbecue sauce recipe: tomato soup, tomato sauce, molasses, vinegar, onion, seasoned salt, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, orange or lemon zest, paprika, pepper. So it doesn't matter whether it's natural or artificial - it's NOT failsafe.

**Q. Is there anywhere to get soft canned pears? Lately they've been like rocks.**

**A.** In my experience, it is always worth complaining - politely at first - about a specific product to the manufacturer, telling them exactly what is wrong and giving them the product code, use by date etc. I wrote to Great Lakes complaining about their hard pears ([greatlakes@maxwellfoods.com](mailto:greatlakes@maxwellfoods.com)) and quoting the all the numbers on the bottom of the can. I received a very friendly letter explaining that they have been using a snow pear variety that is crunchier than the traditional Bartlett variety but they won't do it again, and sending a \$5 cheque for the inconvenience.

**Q. Just wondering if you can tell me what foods are most likely to affect speech especially stuttering?**

**A.** It depends on the child. For some children, the answer can be avoidance of one or two additives such as nitrates in ham, benzoates in drinks or the bread preservative. Other children may need to do the full elimination diet. See our new [factsheet on stuttering](#) and other speech anomalies, including speech delay, loud voice, vocal tics and silly noises.

**Q. I believe that my niece has mild autism that is food related, I've talked to her parents but as they say you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink.**

**A.** The easiest dietary changes you can recommend are to switch to a2 milk (see [www.a2australia.com.au](http://www.a2australia.com.au)); preservative free bread from Brumbys or Bakers Delight; drink water instead of juice and cordial; and avoid artificial colours in lollies by switching to Werthers Originals. Some children improve so much just by doing this that families are then prepared to try the full diet.

**Q. I saw Velcorin listed on a fruit juice label. Is it a safe additive?**

A. Velcorin is a new antimicrobial agent chemically known as Dimethyl dicarbonate (DMDC). It is used for the cold sterilisation of non-alcoholic beverages and can reduce the need for nasty preservatives such as sodium benzoate (211) or sodium metabisulphite (223). Once added to the product, Velcorin breaks down quickly into small amounts of carbon dioxide and methanol, which occur naturally in most beverages, including fruit juice. It is too early for us to be sure, but it seems highly likely that Velcorin will NOT cause children's behaviour, learning problems and other symptoms of food intolerance. (Failsafers will still have to consider natural salicylates and amines in the juice itself). More information about natural food additives including natural colours from [www.victus.com.au](http://www.victus.com.au)

**Q. Are Ingham's 'Lite Chicken Breast Nuggets' failsafe? Ingredients: Chicken (Minimum 56%), Flour (Wheat, Maize, Rice), Salt, Water, Wheat Starch, Whey Protein Concentrate, Thickener (1400), Vegetable Oil, Vegetable Gum (412), Sugar, Mineral Salts (451), Bakers Yeast, Ground Spice. (97% fat free, no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, cost \$6.69 for 13 nuggets at Coles)**

A. Although the label says 'no colours, flavours or preservatives' there could be unlisted BHA 320 or TBHQ 319 in the vegetable oil, the ground spices are a source of salicylates, and as far as we can work out the Bakers Yeast in a non-bread product is probably there as a natural source of nucleotide flavour enhancers otherwise known as 635. Not recommended, see our recipe for homemade nuggets below.

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**(November 2005)**

**Q. Could nausea and vomiting be due to fluoride? Our 3 year old failsafe daughter has been suffering regular, unexplained bouts of nausea since we moved from Brisbane to Canberra 6 months ago. The vomiting has waxed and waned in accordance with other illnesses but became particularly bad after a bout of gastro a few months ago. She was vomiting about once a week for about five weeks after recovering from the gastro. We went to see a paediatrician who could find nothing wrong. Eventually, we remembered that she had reacted with nausea during breastfeeding every time I had taken fluoride tablets. A similar result occurred when we tried to give her fluoride drops in her water after weaning. I tested my theory numerous times during breastfeeding and afterwards with very obvious results and although taking fluoride was recommended by experts, I decided that it was not worth it as it obviously made my daughter ill. My husband noted that Canberra has fluoride in its water while Brisbane does not. Although we have always filtered our water, we have found that carbon filters do not filter fluoride. We put our daughter on to bottled water about 4 weeks ago and she has not had any vomiting since. We have also noted a marked improvement in her health, not just in the areas of nausea, and she is generally a more contented child.**

A. It is estimated that most people currently ingest about four times as much fluoride as they did during the early days of water fluoridation, approximately equally divided between drinking water, food, other beverages, and dental products, so fluorosis (illness due to excessive intake of fluoride) is increasing. Abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting can be some of the first signs of fluoride toxicity. Small children are more vulnerable than adults. At follow up a year later, the child above was still happy and healthy on fluoride free bottled water and dentists have advised that fluoride is not necessary as long as her diet is good and she has good dental hygiene. Further reading: Das TK and others, Toxic effects of chronic fluoride ingestion on the upper gastrointestinal tract. J Clin Gastroenterol. 1994;18(3):194-9; <http://www.diagnose-me.com/cond/C627523.html>.

**Q. Just wondering if others have experienced their girls getting sore vaginas? Most afternoons my little darling cries her eyes out, I have been putting it down to not wiping properly or very concentrated urine as she does not drink huge amounts, but could it be connected with salicylates? She only drinks water and nothing else but she adores fruit, especially canteloupe, watermelon, grapes and apples. The doctors are saying it is sensitivity to urine and is common amongst small girls.**

**A.** You're right, sore vaginas in little girls are often related to salicylates and generally improve when families go failsafe.

**Q. How healthy are the new 'healthy' choices (salads etc) that McDonalds now offers?**

**A.** In Australia, the garden mixed salad without dressing contains 74 calories and 3.9 grams of fat and one nasty additive (sorbic acid 200) but I couldn't find nutrition details for the dressings which is where most of the fat comes from. Compare this to a cheeseburger at 285 calories, 16 grams of fat, and 5 nasty additives (calcium propionate 282, annatto colour 160b, sorbic acid 200, potassium sorbate 202 and sodium benzoate 211). The American website has more information and most people are surprised to find that a salad can contain more fat than a burger when you add dressing. For example, in the US, a bacon ranch salad with grilled chicken and Cobb dressing contains 380 calories, 18 grams of fat and 5 nasty additives (hydrolysed plant proteins HPP, artificial colour, disodium guanylate 627, disodium inosinate 631 and sodium nitrate 251) compared to a cheeseburger that contains 310 calories, 12 grams of fats and 4 nasty additives (potassium propionate 283, calcium propionate 282, sorbic acid 200, artificial colour ). When buying a salad in any restaurant consider the research on the nutritive value of bagged salads (Failsafe Newsletter 46). All of the meals mentioned contain high amounts of salicylates, amines or natural glutamates. You can buy McDonalds toys at the drive thru (\$2). You can buy water. You can use the playground and toilets without having to buy a meal. More at [www.mcdonalds.com.au](http://www.mcdonalds.com.au) and note that the French fries now contain BHA 320.

**Q. My 4 year old daughter is doing well on a low salicylate/amine diet with absolutely no preservatives but sometimes, even when her diet has been constant, she has mood changes, irritability etc. especially after days at kindy although she has none of the food from there. Can she be reacting to environmental chemicals?**

**A.** Most common would be colours from coloured playdough but you also need to consider smells of perfumes, solvents etc. See the playgroup factsheet on the website for suggestions.

**Q. Is Massel stock powder failsafe (ingredients: salt, rice, flour, sugar, dextrose, yeast extracts, vegetable flavours, vegetable protein extract (wheat derived), dehydrated onion, pure olive oil, chilli)?**

**A.** The first five ingredients are failsafe; the next three contain natural glutamates (flavour enhancers); the last three contain salicylates.

**Q. I recently started my two year old son on an elimination diet as advised by my paediatrician to see what effects foods are having on his behaviour. We were going quite well over the last four weeks until his doctor prescribed antibiotics for an ear infection and his behaviour started to deteriorate. My paediatrician also put my son on an iron supplement Ferro-Liquid (Ferrous Sulfate Oral Liquid Solution 30mb/ml) and Roche Pentavite Liquid which says it has no artificial colours or preservatives but has a citrus fruit flavour. Since his ear infection he has had a cough from a runny nose at night and in the early hours of the morning.**

**A.** Many doctors, paediatricians and pharmacists do not seem to understand that children's flavoured vitamin, antibiotic and other medicinal syrups are never failsafe and will prevent the diet from succeeding. The Ferro liquid is particularly bad because it contains both sulphite and benzoate preservatives that could be causing your son's cough and nasal problems.

Plain unflavoured adult tablets instead, using a half dose for children, are more suitable, e.g. Amcal One-a-day multivitamins and FGF tablets for iron. See the vitamins and supplements factsheet on the website for how to get tablets into kids.

**Q. My 4.5 year old son has been eating failsafe for 5 months with amazing results. I have read all your books, belong to your discussion groups and have done the PPP program. Thanks to you and only you, when failsafe he is a loving and compliant angel with a dry nose and no physical problems. When he is not failsafe he is aggressive, defiant, never satisfied, loses his temper, discipline is ineffective and he has difficulty falling asleep, along with continual runny nose, recurrent ear infections, bright red ears, sore tummy etc. Our doctor said that so long as I kept my son failsafe, I would keep his behaviour at bay but suggested I would not be able to do this forever (tiring, time consuming, school canteen etc), and because of that, he would probably be diagnosed with ADHD in the long run, where other strategies would be looked at - I'm presuming medication. I would love to hear your opinion.**

**A.** My kids are at university now, living in a hall of residence where they have to cater for themselves. They choose to be failsafe, still with amazing results, so it can be done. Only a few years ago most doctors said diet didn't work, so it is a big step forward to find a doctor admitting that diet is effective. The next step is for doctors and schools to help us with our loving and compliant angels by minimising the use of nasty food additives and supporting failsafe food for those who need it. The more we spread the word, the sooner it will happen.

**Q. I was watching Today Tonight on TV last night and a story on Flavours came on. One of the pictures they aired was of a person with a red rash on the body. I have been getting a rash like that, as well as swelling on the eyes and mouth for the past three years and doctors, allergists and skin doctors can not find the problem. Could you please tell me what flavours are most likely to cause this reaction?**

**A.** Flavour enhancers 627, 631 and 635. See the Ribo Rash factsheet on the website for more information.

**Q. The list of ingredients in our sunscreen sounds pretty nasty but unfortunately it means nothing to me. What should I be looking for? Sunscreen plays a daily part in our life on the Gold Coast, and I have always been concerned about what I am been putting on our children's skin.**

**A.** Laboratory tests suggest that some of the ingredients especially methoxycinnamate can provoke cancerous growth in test tubes (not necessarily in people), so I try to minimise sunscreen use by sun avoidance and covering up - widebrim hats, sunshirts, long pants. Failsafers also need to be wary of perfumes (salicylates) and benzoate preservatives. However, there are times you have to use sunscreen. It is important to avoid sunscreens based on PABA (Para AminoBenzoic Acid) as they contain large amounts of benzoates similar to what you get in preservative sodium benzoate (211). Hydroxybenzoate preservatives can also affect failsafers through skin absorption especially if you get large doses and continuous exposure but it is not possible to get sunscreen without. Sunscreens for toddlers or sensitive skins are generally best tolerated, e.g. from the Ego sunsense range. We use the Cancer Council Everyday Lite because the smell isn't too bad.

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**(July 2005)**

**Q. Is Peters Original Vanilla Ice Cream with "new improved recipe" marked on the top right hand corner still failsafe?**

**A.** The flavour has changed and we have received many complaints from failsafers. Comments from adults and children include "yuk", "vile", "disgusting" and "fake". My kids say it doesn't taste that bad but don't want to eat it. The consumer hotline officer explained to one failsafer that "original" on the label does not refer to the recipe being original, as you may have thought, but is a trademark. You can try other brands in your supermarket. Sarah Lee French Vanilla is still a good safe brand as far as I know or you can buy that icecream maker you always wanted. Our Breville Scoop Factory icecream maker has been working overtime during the holidays. See our favourite new recipe in Cooks' Corner below.

**Q. Does thrush improve on the failsafe diet?**

**A.** Yes. Several failsafers have reported that they find the failsafe diet much easier to stick to than the candida diet and their lifelong thrush problems have cleared up.

**Q. My ADHD son is only five, in prep and he has trouble in the playground. Typically he won't eat his sandwich or whatever and goes off to the senior playground - preps have their own playground but are not policed to stay there – where he has been bullied several times so I have come up with a plan to assist my son with his diet and the playground dilemma. We live straight across the road from school and I work three minutes drive from home, so I am going to take an hour for lunch and bring him home for lunch everyday. I can then make sure he eats and I can actually cook him lunch, so that beats the boring sandwich problem. It will help him by not being around kids eating brightly coloured prepackaged food and coming home for lunch is a treat. It will also help me to take some time out from work which can be extremely stressful at times and I love coming home for lunch, especially having something cooked. We may even invite a classmate occasionally to help him form friendship bonds - he can relate to and play well with other children much better in a controlled environment). So it's a great plan, hey?**

**A.** Yes, it's a wonderful plan! Your son is lucky that you are able to do that for him. Playgrounds are terrible places for kids with food intolerance. When my kids attended a supportive private school, the library was open at recess and lunchtime for kids who do better in small, quiet controlled environments, and for one marvellous year an exceptionally talented teacher opened her classroom for lunch, allowing students to use classroom resources including books, computer games and board games. Having a 'withdrawing room' option to the playground would be one of the most supportive steps schools could take for kids with food-related behaviour, health or learning problems.

**Q. I recently ate Seafood Salad in mornay sauce at my father's house for lunch. There was some left over so I took it home and ate it again for dinner. A few hours later I started feeling strange, my face went red and my eyes started swelling alarmingly. I was scared I was going to get worse so I rushed to hospital where they treated me with antihistamines. I'd like to know what caused it, because I don't want to go through that again.**

**A.** From your symptoms, I would expect the culprit to be flavour enhancer ribonucleotides 635 (or its components 627 and 631) so I visited our local fishermen's co-op to check. They sell several brands, a 'seafood extender' sold recently thawed and unlabelled, and two frozen packets "Seafood Salad" and "Seafood Sticks" both from Thailand. The ingredients lists are similar (white fish, egg white, crab extract, crab flavour, tapioca starch, sat, wheat starch, sugar, natural food colour 120). It is rare but possible to have an allergic reaction to colour 120 (cochineal). However, the delay in your symptoms suggests ribonucleotides. While the crab extract and crab flavour have no numbers on the Seafood salad, the crab sticks list crab flavour (631, 627) as well as MSG 621. So I am guessing that's your problem – unlisted ribonucleotides.

**(March 2005)**

**Q. My doctor says that the salicylate level drops and the vitamin C level increases in the last three days before the fruit drops off the tree. Is this true?**

**A.** I haven't been able to find any research that mentions three days, but yes, it is true that beneficial antioxidant vitamin levels rise at the end of ripening, and that salicylate levels are lowest at the beginning and end and highest in the middle of the life of the fruit – which is often when it is picked for supermarkets and processing. Also, salicylate levels are lowest between sundown and sunup, so windfalls and ripe fruit picked before dawn for farmers markets and in Asia will be at the lowest possible levels, especially if from old fashioned varieties that haven't been bred for pest resistance and to stay firm. This would explain why we found we could eat soft, sweet, ripe pineapples, oranges, mandarins, tomatoes and strawberries with no effects in Indonesia, Nepal and Egypt. It is also possible that artificially ripened supermarket fruit is chemically different from fruit ripened on trees. More information from A Comprehensive Explanation of Plant Hormones by Paul Pruitt (he regards salicylates as hormones) on Wikipedia.

**Q. My husband's boss has invited us to an Indian restaurant and we can't refuse – any suggestions?**

**A.** It won't be failsafe but you can minimise the damage. Indian restaurants often use artificial colours so avoid any tandoori dishes (artificial reds). Yellow rice can be due to saffron (failsafe) or artificial yellow but most places will cook white rice for you. Sunset yellow (artificial, 110) is sometimes used in any dish containing yoghurt and some restaurants use other artificial colours as well. You could phone beforehand to ask about colours. Choose failsafe ingredients, eg lamb, chicken or lentils rather than prawns, eggplant or spinach, and ask for mild curries. Indian breads such as roti are probably made on the premises and are usually safe. Vegetable samosas (potatoes and peas) can be quite mild. Cucumber raita – a small amount of cucumber in a large amount of natural yoghurt – is fairly safe. Water or soda water are the best drinks. Wine is a problem but if you must have it to be polite, drink one glass slowly, refusing refills. Indian sweets such as gulab jamun or kulfi (mango icecream) are fairly safe unless they contain artificial colours or you have a problem with dairy foods. When I have to eat out, I have a tsp of soda bicarb in a glass of water as soon as I get home and several times the next day.

**Q. Could you please tell me what others do for Easter celebrations? We live in country NSW and I don't have a clue. My son has asked me if the Easter Bunny still comes. He can eat carob without any adverse reactions.**

**A.** Most people can buy commercial carob Easter eggs. If not, you can make your own by melting carob blocks and pouring into commercial Easter egg moulds or spoons – when set, warm the flat edges slightly to stick them together, then wrap them in foil. Another suggestion is to use some of those tiny chocolate Easter eggs - as a treat - in a big Easter egg hunt, so the hunt itself is more fun than the eating. You could also join one of the email discussion groups for suggestions. One mother bought the Tigger/Pooh Bear Mask Easter eggs from Big W to use the mask for making carob versions and also suggested making marshmallow and carob eggs using moulds.

**Q. Can you help with the name of a worm tablet that is suitable? I can't find one which is colour, flavour, and preservative free.**

**A.** There are no failsafe worm tablets. If your kids react, you might want to tell the Adverse Medications Event hotline (1300 134 237). It is our chance to change the system. If they get enough reports from us, they might introduce colour-free, preservative-free, flavour-free medications. Failsafers say the staff are incredibly friendly and helpful.

**Q. Our pediatrician has basically said that my son has ADHD, but he is not into foods as a cause. I need some help.**

**A.** I've sent you our dietitians' list and suggestions about how to find a dietitian. If you can't find one in your area, a number of failsafers have also recommended doctors through the list at ACNEM, the Australasian College of Nutrition and Environmental Medicine ([www.acnem.org](http://www.acnem.org)). While most of the ACNEM health professionals are not able to fully explain the failsafe diet – you need to study that for yourself – failsafers report they are aware of salicylates and amines, prepared to listen, respect your opinions, encourage you, test for coeliac disease if appropriate, and check your child's nutrition.

**Q. How does the Glycaemic Index (GI) apply to failsafe foods?**

**A.** The GI measures the rate at which carbohydrate foods are digested and absorbed in the body. Low GI carbohydrate foods are considered to be healthiest because they provide a gradual energy release – keeping your blood sugar level - throughout the day. High GI foods provide a quick energy boost. Overall it is best to have a combination. See a list of the GI per serve for failsafe foods below. You can turn a high GI food into a low or moderate GI food by mixing it with a low GI food. However you need to apply some commonsense. Since fats and oils have low GI, in some commercial products, the low GI rating comes from high fat, which is not desirable. Potato crisps are a good example. Saturated fat is now considered to be far worse for people with diabetes than sugar. The moral of the GI story is that it is good to limit your intake of dietary fats, to include low GI carbohydrate foods such as nuts, lentils, beans, oats, pasta and cereal fibre such as bran (from wheat, oats, rice or psyllium) in your diet and to eat balanced meals and snacks rather than to consume sweets or sugary drinks alone. More details from The GI Factor by Dr Jennie Brand Miller and others, Hodder, many editions.

100 Glucose

90 Bread, gluten free (adding fillings will reduce the GI)

83 Rice bubbles (serving with milk or soymilk will reduce GI, but see porridge at 42)

70 Bread, white or wholemeal (average)

70 Mashed potato

69 Milk arrowroot biscuits

66 Magic cordial (and non failsafe soft drinks)

65 Sugar (sucrose)

65 Rye bread

61 Icecream (average)

55 Oatmeal biscuits

55 Banana (FS for non amine responders)

54 Pound cake

54 Potato crisps

59 Rice, Doongara compared to 87 for Calrose

- 48 Peas, green, fresh or frozen half cup (FS if moderate glutamates tolerated)
- 42 Porridge made with water, same as All-Bran
- 41 Spaghetti, white, cooked
- 38 Pear, fresh compared to about 50 canned in syrup
- 31 Soy milk (So Good)
- 28 Sausages, fried
- 28 Lentils, boiled
- 27 Milk, full fat
- 27 Kidney beans
- 25 Barley, pearled
- 19 Rice bran (psyllium is also low, failsafe and can be added to cereals)
- 14 Cashews (assuming same as peanuts)

**Q. I am worried that the failsafe diet contains too much sugar.**

**A.** Many failsafers find they need extra treats to help them get through withdrawals and the food chemical cravings stage. After your family is settled on the diet, you can reduce sugar and increase vegetables. (“I just gave up baking, and it’s much easier now” said one failsafer 12 months after starting failsafe). However, you can choose failsafe foods without sugar from the beginning if that’s what you want. See Ethan’s menu in Newsletter 43 for an example of a child’s glutenfree, dairyfree failsafe day with little sugar. One mother was pleased to hear that you can feed children dinner recipes such as pasta, mince and vegies for lunch and snacks - “I never thought of that,” she said. I myself like sugary desserts for treats and special occasions but what I ate yesterday is an example of my regular weekday diet – it’s fairly low in fat and sugar, and contains many low GI foods:

- cooked porridge with chopped tinned pear half and home-made soy yoghurt
- toast with bean or cashew paste and fresh pear (sometimes half a mango - my moderate salicylate allowance)
- Mountain bread wrap with Howard’s bean paste (Failsafe 43, or sometimes a hard boiled egg) and Mighty Salad (see recipes below)
- small handful of raw cashews (if bean paste used on toast above)
- vegetable soup with red lentils and barley
- panfried fresh white fish (can be lamb stew, chicken stirfry, egg stirfry, kidney beans) with rice, green beans, cabbage, brussel sprout and carrot (my moderate salicylate allowance)
- bowl of quick cook oats, canned pear and soy yoghurt for dessert
- drinks – water, decaf, hot carob with soymilk.

See also the Failsafe Weightloss factsheet.

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**(November 2004)**

**Q. What is a shallot and how is it different from different types of onion?**

**A:**

**Shallots**

In this book, shallots refer to the member of the onion family which are like thin leeks, with an unformed bulb. Sometimes they are called spring or green onions but spring onions which have a rounded bulb like an onion are not failsafe. Shallots, leeks, chives and garlic are all members of the onion family and appear to be linked with the prevention of cancer and heart disease.



**Q. How does the recent link between macular degeneration (blindness) and certain fats affect the failsafe diet?**

**A.** Trans fats are created when manufacturers make liquid oils into the more solid partially hydrogenated oils used in margarines, shortening and thousands of processed foods. Twenty years ago, scientist through that these trans fats were safe but in the 1990s scientists found that trans fats raise LDL (bad cholesterol) as much as saturated fat does. Now new evidence indicates that trans fats also lower HDL (good cholesterol) and studies in the US - where trans fat consumption is four times greater than in Australia - have associated trans fats with macular degeneration. The makers of Nuttalex have advised us that they are very close to production of a low (less than 1%) trans fat Nuttalex and hope to have it in stores by Xmas. Since macular degeneration is also linked with overweight and smoking, consumers are advised to maintain a healthy weight, choose healthy fats in moderation (fish and nuts are protective), stop smoking, and eat lots of vegetables and fruit. More details: [http://www.csiro.au/ProprietaryDocuments/fat\\_and\\_macular\\_degeneration.pdf](http://www.csiro.au/ProprietaryDocuments/fat_and_macular_degeneration.pdf)

**Q. My son's teacher and I had a verbal agreement that he would not give my son any food or drink. Well, last Friday he gave my son a piece of chocolate cake and said 'don't tell your mum' but my son told me, 'I'm not going to bother lying to you mum, because I know you can tell when I've had something just by looking at my eyes'.**

**A.** One failsafer achieved a high level of cooperation from her school by telling her story in the school newsletter, see our new factsheet "Please Don't Feed My Child". Perhaps you could tell your own story in your newsletter in a similar way, or ask your school to reprint our factsheet.

**Q. Just wanted to know if you can eat Subway on the failsafe diet?'**

**A.** As you can see from the Subway ingredients list, most items contain non-failsafe additives. The safest choice would be roast beef and lettuce on Italian bread, no pickles, no dressing, although we are not sure about azodicarbamide (927) bread improver, which has only recently been approved in Australia. Perhaps you could take your own failsafe ketchup or mayonnaise. If you don't care about salicylates and amines you could also have fresh cucumbers, yellow mustard and tuna, see <http://subway.com/subwayroot/MenuNutrition/Nutrition/frmUSIngredients.aspx>

**Q. Do sulfites mainly affect asthmatics or are they mood altering?**

**A.** Like other food chemicals, sulfites (or sulphites) can be associated with any of the symptoms of food intolerance including irritable bowel, headaches, itchy skin rashes and mood. This is particularly concerning as sulfites are the most commonly used preservative, present in nearly all processed foods.

**Q. When my ADHD son eats kiwi fruit, his behaviour doesn't change. Since kiwi fruit is very high in salicylates, does this mean he isn't affected by salicylates?**

**A.** Very few parents ever notice a reaction to salicylates in foods because salicylates are eaten many times a day, every day. Most children don't react to a few serves of fruit, but the effects build up slowly. You will only see the difference when you avoid salicylates then do a challenge -note that failing to eat six good serves of high salicylates per day during the challenge can cause confusing results. If in doubt, it's a good idea to repeat the challenge.

**Q. I bought a black winter coat labelled 'made in China', and didn't realise until I got it home that its horrible tar or creosote-type smell gives me a nasty headache.**

**A.** A failsafer with exactly the same problem reported that airing and drycleaning had no effect. Despite the 'dryclean only' label, he achieved a wearable garment by soaking his coat in Lux flakes for three days, running it through the washing machine at least six times, and storing it in a drying room for months. Surprisingly, the coat did not shrink.

**Q. Chic Nuts roasted chickpeas are so delicious, are you sure they are failsafe?**

**A.** According to the manufacturer, Chic Nuts are made from locally grown chickpeas soaked in pure spring water overnight before being roasted in Monola oil (a more monounsaturated and therefore healthier version of Canola). Then they are tossed in natural seasonings to give them various flavours – the ones we can eat are pure garlic powder and sea salt. There are no anti-oxidants in the Monola oil. The sodium is low compared with popular salty snacks (480mg per 100g) and the GI is 37. More information from [www.partnerfoods.com.au](http://www.partnerfoods.com.au) Chic Nuts are available from Safeways and Woolworths, in the Naytura aisle. Information about Monola oil:

<http://www.csiro.au/index.asp?type=mediaRelease&id=Prmonola&stylesheet=mediaRelease>

**Q. My husband's gout has improved since our family went failsafe. He's not really on the diet but eats a lot of our failsafe food. Is the failsafe diet for gout?**

**A.** People with gout are affected by food chemicals called purines. Many high-purine foods such as wine, beer, tea, anchovies, gravy, meat extracts and sardines are avoided on the failsafe diet because they are also high in salicylates or amines. However, some failsafe foods such as dried beans and lentils contain moderate amounts of purines. For more information, see <http://dialadietitian.org/resources/handouts/goutdiet.html>

**Q. I bought normal white Panadol tablets and the children's chewable Panadol for my 5 year old son because the lady in the chemist's thought it was ok. I'm confused as it says on the packet 'no added colours or flavours' but also says pleasant tasting.**

**A.** I was unable to find the inactive ingredients in chewable Panadol (unfortunately they don't have to be listed on medications), but pleasant tasting chewable tablets obviously contain flavour. The dose recommended on the children's packet for 3 - 6 year olds is 2 tablets, which are 120mg paracetamol each, so 240mg in total, in which case 1/2 plain white tablet is the same. You can crush it and mix with golden syrup etc, see the Supplements Factsheet. Please, anyone whose child has reacted to flavoured tablets, tell the AME hotline (Adverse Medications Event - 1300 134 237). It is only by complaining that we can get authorities to realize that unlisted ingredients in medications can affect our children.

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**(July 2004)**

**Q. The new 'Explogo' dairy snack contains colour 160c, listed as not permitted in Australia. Is it a bad colour?**

**A.** The Food Standards Code has changed recently to allow many more additives including colours in Australian foods. Colour 160c is Capsanthin, a natural extract from red peppers. Since food additives are not tested by authorities for their effects on children's behaviour and learning (or indeed, on asthmatics, people with eczema, irritable bowel symptoms or headaches), we do not know yet whether this additive is good or bad. It might be safe (such as 160a, betacarotene) or not (like 160b annatto). When it is added to a product which is otherwise failsafe (Explogo is not), failsafers on their elimination diet will be able to do a challenge with it to see whether we can use it or not.

**Q. I'd like to do the diet for my asthma but I'm not prepared to give up wine.**

**A.** If you only have to avoid sulphites there are good preservative-free wine such as the 1999 Happs PF Red from Margaret River ([www.happs.com.au](http://www.happs.com.au)). If you need to avoid salicylates etc as well, see the new Product Updates section – we think we have discovered a completely failsafe fruit wine.

**Q. I have an overactive bladder with urinary urgency and frequency. I am on Detrusitol but find that it has unwanted side effects and is very expensive. I heard that some foods may cause this condition.**

**A.** Everyone is different, and basically any food chemical can cause different symptoms in susceptible individuals. In my experience, the food chemicals and foods most likely to be related to urinary urgency, incontinence (and bedwetting in children) are salicylates, amines, propionate bread preservatives (280-282), other additives, and dairy products. You could try switching to preservative-free bread and drinking only water. This works for some people. Or you could try the elimination diet with challenges to find out exactly which components of your diet might be affecting you.

**Q. I had an annoying reaction to Pampas Puff Pastry with Canola. I only had a small amount - about 1/6 of a piece - and was awake at night for a few hours around 2am or 3am. I tried a few times with the same result. Very annoying because the pastry is delicious!**

**A.** My apologies. The last information on the website was reversed. The Pampas Butter Puff Pasty is failsafe, the Puff Pastry with Canola contains listed preservatives.

**Q. We are taking our 5-year-old failsafe son on an overseas holiday. Are additive numbers the same globally?**

**A.** Additive numbers in Europe are the same as Australia with an E before the number, so tartrazine yellow colouring (102) is E102. Additives do not have numbers in the USA, so you will have to learn names. For example, for 200, it might say 'sorbic acid as a preservative', or for 319 'TBHQ (to preserve freshness)', for 282 'calcium propionate (preservative)'. There is a different classification for artificial colours so tartrazine is Yellow 5, more details in the Failsafe Cookbook page 16.

**Q. To the person who enquired about failsafe travel in Norway, I accidentally deleted your email.**

**A.** Our Swedish contact is a failsafe Australian family living in Sweden and will be able to help you: see email under local contacts on [www.fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au)

**Q. I noticed that some of the symptoms listed on your site are also related to chemicals, especially in the home.**

**A.** We recommend avoiding a wide range of household chemicals (see the Factsheet on fumes and perfumes). For home cleaning, we recommend soda bicarbonate, hand dishwashing liquid, automatic dishwasher powder, vinegar, microfibre cloths and steam mops. See the virtual house at [www.checnet.org](http://www.checnet.org) for a room by room explanation of toxic chemicals.

**Q. Have you had any reports from people with multiple sclerosis who have responded to the elimination diet?**

**A.** Yes, see our new 'Multiple Sclerosis and diet' factsheet.

**Q. I have been on the failsafe for one month. Yesterday I took 2 Ibuprofen for menstrual cramps. Last night I woke up with my heart pounding and little muscle tics and twitches all over my body. I felt agitated and depressed, and have felt bad all day. I am trying to figure out what caused this reaction. Ibuprofen is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, not aspirin, and it doesn't have salicylates in it. What caused the reaction?**

**A.** People who are sensitive to aspirin (which is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) and salicylates generally react to other NSAIDs as well. Although Ibuprofen doesn't list salicylates as an ingredient, you need to avoid this and any medication which says 'if you have an allergy to aspirin you should tell your doctor' on the CMI (Consumer Medicine Information) sheet. If you don't have a CMI, you can look it up on [www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com).

**Q. In Brisbane (and Sydney) there is a clinic called 'Advanced Allergy' using kinesiology (for diagnostic reasons) and while the patient holds a vial of the offending substance, they use a treatment to strengthen the body so that it associates the offending substance as something good. I was wondering if you knew of any other families who had used this and if they found it helpful.**

**A.** There are numerous alternative therapies which claim to improve tolerance. None of them are scientifically proven. In my experience the failsafe diet helps by far the greatest number of people and the more strictly it is done, the better the results. Alternative therapies can actually stop the failsafe diet from working properly either by encouraging people not to follow it strictly, or by using supplements which are not failsafe. Children will continue to improve for at least nine months after you get the diet right so it is worth giving the failsafe diet a really good try for about 12 months – it takes many families that long to really settle into it. Usually alternative therapies help some people but not others and they can be extremely expensive. Therapies which are not intrusive and do not interfere with failsafe include AAE, NAET, No Phenol, osteopathy and chiropractic. Enzymes therapies are nearly but not fully failsafe. Therapies which can actually interfere with failsafe include supplements such as fish oil capsules and other vitamin and mineral supplements. There is more scientific evidence for fish oil capsules (available from pharmacists) than for other supplements but they definitely make some children better and some worse. You need to test them as a challenge. We have received numerous complaints about the aggressive marketing techniques associated with some expensive supplements that are additive free but not failsafe. I am always extremely suspicious of any product that has to be purchased through from a distributor who makes money by signing up other distributors (Multi Level Marketing).

**(April 2004)**

**Q. We usually have a huge Easter egg hunt and my son keeps asking will he be able to have any eggs. Can he have a chocolate challenge over Easter?**

**A.** You can't use regular Easter eggs for the amine challenge because they contain too much flavour (salicylates). Dark chocolate is recommended so Nestle dark choc bits (unflavoured) are ideal. You can make your own chocolate eggs out of that, by melting it down (in a double boiler) and using commercial chocolate egg moulds or you can use two spoons.

For non-amine responders, one failsafer has recommended the Lindt chocolate carrots available this year in Coles supermarkets because they are unflavoured.

Otherwise, you can buy carob Easter eggs. One failsafer wrote 'I have one 80gm carob egg, ingredients: milk solids, vegetable oil (palm kernel), carob powder (3%) and emulsifier (soya lecithin). I also have a small plastic rabbit container to put Pascall white marshmallows in.'

Or you can regard Easter as a treat, buy a packet of the very little chocolate Easter eggs as a way of minimising the harm, and use them for a big Easter egg hunt, so the hunt is more fun than eating the eggs.

I am usually inundated by emails from parents telling me how horrible their kids are in the week after Easter because the amine reaction is generally delayed and can last up to a week or more.

**Q. Do you know anything about BeCALM'd?**

**A.** Two families have reported that this product really works. Ingredients include natural amino acids 5HTP (L-5- hydroxytryptophan) and phenylalanine. In 1989 L-tryptophan supplements were associated with eosinophilia myalgia syndrome (EMS) including 37 deaths which may have been due to a bad batch. In 2001, the FDA warned that EMS and related disorders are also reported to be associated with exposure to L-5-hydroxytryptophan, which is not made in the same manner as L-tryptophan. (<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ds-tryp1.html>). Phenylalanine may interact with certain psychotropic medications to cause movement disorders. Consult your medical professional before combining it with ADHD medication.

**Q. A lady in a bakery told me this week that she was waiting on a delivery of new bread bags, as they had to list all ingredients now! (yay) Do you have the particulars of the new legislation?**

**A.** The 'new' legislation is the new Food Standards Code, which was introduced in December 2002. Manufacturers were given until December 2003 to use up old packaging. The new code requires nutrition information and reduces the labelling loophole from 10% to 5%, but still doesn't require all ingredients to be listed. For example, it still means BHA (320) or TBHQ (319) can be hidden in products such as chips and biscuits in amounts which can affect our kids, especially if eaten every day (see disastrous Christmas story [316] ).

**Q. Can you tell me how badly this preservative in 7UP lemonade would affect my child, and an alternative drink I could give her?**

**A.** The preservative is sodium benzoate (211). It has been implicated in everything from asthma to itchy skin rashes to behaviour. Behavioural reactions are likely to be next day irritability, lasting all day, with outbursts if things go wrong. One woman who hadn't noticed the new preservative wrote 'My son had temper tantrums 20-24 hours after having the 7UP. We have stopped buying it now'. As an alternative, Schweppes bottled lemonade is preservative-free but limited to 150 ml per week because of salicylates and amines in the

natural lemon flavour. You could try the Magic Cordial recipe in all my books and on the website brochures.

**Q. Last summer I took a vitamin supplement and about 5 minutes later my heart started beating so fast and I couldn't breathe, and felt weak and cold-sweaty. I honestly and truly thought I was going to die. My mom sped me to the hospital emergency where they performed some tests, but according to them I could not be in better health. After about an hour of being tested all the symptoms went away just as suddenly as they came. I never had that before then or since, and I am 100% sure it was brought on by the supplement, although at the hospital they did not believe me.**

**A.** Heart palpitations are a well-documented reaction to some of the B group Vitamins B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin, niacinamide, nicotinamide, nicotinic acid) and B6 (pyridoxine, pyridoxol, pyridoxamine). Another failsafer described a sudden rash, dizziness, shortness of breath and 'my whole head became hot, flushed and red, so much that a colleague came over concerned' five hours after taking a multivitamin tablet which was free of additives and herbs. Niacin is known to cause flushing. There could also be hidden colours or herbs that affect some people.

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**(December 2003)**

**Q. We gave our son some soda bicarb in a glass of magic cordial when he was having one of his hissy fits and he calmed down immediately. How does this work?**

**A.** Salicylates and similar food chemicals (colours, preservatives) delay gastric emptying and accumulate in the stomach thus allowing continuing absorption. Sodium bicarbonate increases excretion by increasing the pH of the urine. It is used in hospitals when patients present with acute or chronic salicylate poisoning. According to many failsafers, half a cup of soda bicarb in the bath water works 'brilliantly' for both eczema and behaviour, and can be used 3 times a day. Many mothers say that 1/8 tsp in a glass of water works well but not if used more than once a day. Adults can have 1 tsp up to 3 times a day. If you have to break your diet (eg Christmas day), don't wait for reactions to appear. Take soda bicarb as soon as possible.

**Q. I tried your pavlova recipe and it turned out brown and rubbery. What did I do wrong?**

**A.** There are two possible causes. First, don't over-beat the egg white and so break down the protein fibres. Whip it to stiff peaks and then add the sugar. Second, make sure that all the sugar is fully dissolved in the egg white by beating for long enough. The stiff baked structure depends on water being taken from the egg white by the dissolved sugar. Test by putting a little bit of the mixture on your tongue - if you can feel any crystals, keep beating.

**Q. I know I get migraines from MSG but I have had a migraine for two days so far from eating a Divine Classic Passionfruit Pannacotta by [www.natfoods.com.au](http://www.natfoods.com.au). As it didn't have any flavour enhancers I thought it would be OK. It has 8 numbers including 1442 Halal Gelatine Thickener, 410 Vegetable Gum, 415 Vegetable Gum, 466 Vegetable Gum, 331 Food Acid, 120 Natural Colour, 160b natural Colour, 200 Preservative. Which one would be the culprit?**

**A.** Vegetable gums, thickeners and food acids are generally OK. Natural colour 160b (annatto) has been associated with violent headaches (and headbanging in toddlers) and preservative 200 (sorbic acid) can be a problem. You might also have to worry about natural food chemicals called salicylates or amines. Passionfruit is very high in both and is much more concentrated in a dessert syrup than a fresh passionfruit.

**Q. We started on the elimination diet for our 2-year-old with eczema a week ago. There was no improvement and the eczema has spread each day until now the only parts of her body not covered with this lumpy raised itchy rash are her feet and her upper back. Please help! I am trying so hard to do the right thing by her, only I seem to be making it worse. The eczema started about the time she started solids at 6 months. We have creams and oils that I put on her at least 3 times a day and even in the night when the itch wakes her up.**

**A.** This problem turned out to be herbal creams containing salicylates. When the mother switched to soda-bicarb baths 3 times a day, her daughter's eczema started improving, but flared up dramatically for a week after 8 Darryl Lea White Jelly Beans (see product warning). A girl with a similar eczema problem was using a doctor-prescribed cream containing methyl salicylate. Salicylates in medications and herbs are well-absorbed through skin and must be avoided during the elimination diet.

**Q. I have not found references to tinnitus as a symptom in your Cookbook yet increased tinnitus is a sure sign of a food reaction for me. What do you think?**

**A.** Sorry, that is an oversight. Tinnitus (the sensation of sounds in the ears in the absence of an external sound source) is a well documented side-effect of salicylates in drugs and foods, as well as food colours and preservatives. It tends to be age-related, rarely occurring in children, frequently occurring in over-65s.

**Q. I wish someone told me that the best way of preventing future allergies may be not to feed the usual allergenic foods to young babies (wheat, eggs, fish, milk etc) when my son was weaned from breastfeeding. He is now allergic (not just intolerant) to all these food groups. How are parents supposed to know until it is too late?**

**A.** It is recommended that mothers of babies with a family history of true allergy (asthma, eczema, hayfever) avoid the main allergens (as above, but also especially nuts) during the last month of pregnancy and during breastfeeding, and delay introduction of these foods to their babies. See Fed Up with Asthma for more information.

**Q. I wrote to you early this year about my son's skin ('incessant picking/scratching at his skin. It's as though his whole body is alive and crawling and he just can't keep his hands off it. At night in bed he scratches non-stop until he finally drifts off to sleep'). When I couldn't link it to any particular food, you suggested garlic. You were right. Not one of the numerous doctors and other health professionals we saw mentioned that. How on earth did you know?**

**A.** I had the same problem with itching when I had infectious hepatitis. I was so itchy I would scratch my skin with a wire hairbrush yet there was no rash. Garlic turned out to be a big problem. You might want to have your son tested for hepatitis.

**Q. Sam Tinsley's lollipops are quite a hit with the kids. Is cochineal OK?**

**A.** Cochineal is made from beetles not plants and is safe unless you come from an allergic (as opposed to intolerant) family. Be careful if you have a family history of allergy to horses or insects. There have been a few reports of occupational asthma and one report of non-occupational asthma worldwide but no intolerance effects. If buying cochineal for yourself, make sure it is preservative-free. Glucose syrup contains sulphites but when it has been heated commercially to very high temperatures, as it would have to be to get such hard, opaque lollipops, the sulphites have probably all been driven off. So far there have been no reports of reactions to the lollipops ([www.sweettreats.com.au](http://www.sweettreats.com.au)) despite extensive testing by enthusiastic failsafers. Thanks to all those who were so understanding when the Christmas candy canes travelled badly and arrived in pieces.

**Q. My daughter was diagnosed last year with petit mal, the mildest form of epilepsy, when I noticed that she was 'zoning out' every now and then. I didn't think too much about it but when I mentioned it to the pediatrician, he said this form of epilepsy is common in young children and ordered tests. She has to take medication twice a day. If she misses one day of medicine, she doesn't 'zone out'. But after about 3 days, it starts back up again. Is there a chance that changing her diet might help with her condition?**

**A.** If there is a history of food intolerance such as migraines in the family, it is worth a try (see factsheet on website). You might like to switch immediately to preservative-free bread. A number of families have reported similar 'zoning out' reactions to the bread preservative (282). Artificial colours are another group of additives worth avoiding. If that doesn't work it's probably worth trying the full failsafe diet.

**Q. I'm just wondering what's involved in being a support person? I've notice that country Victoria is not represented and the way people treat you when you try and discuss issues with them. Our local Bakers Delight has been wonderful with their assistance but supermarket shopping takes hours. I'm sure I could get a few families together.**

**A.** Thank you for your offer. We prefer contact people to have followed the elimination diet for at least three weeks under the supervision of a dietitian (if possible); completed at least two challenges; and belonged to an email discussion group for at least a month (if possible) - although we do realise that not everyone can do this. There are big benefits in failsafe families getting together to organise foods such as sausages, bread, treats, failsafe-friendly dietitians and other health professionals, or support in schools. Everyone does it differently. Some people run meetings, or local email groups, or offer telephone or email contact. We can lend you videos if you want to run a few meetings. If you'd like to be on the contact list, send me your email address or phone number and I can refer people to you.

**Q. When we challenged MSG, my daughter's bedwetting returned. Is this a typical characteristic of MSG?**

**A.** As with other symptoms, children are different and can be affected by any of the usual suspects. MSG has been implicated with bedwetting.

**Q. My ten-year-old son's behaviour, concentration and bedwetting have improved on the elimination diet but seems to have a reverse effect on my 4-year-old daughter. She has become quite out of character - very disruptive at preschool and even to the extent of being rude to the teacher. She has also had bouts of teariness. Have you heard of this happening before?**

**A.** When children get worse on the diet it is usually because they are eating a lot more of an item such as dairy foods or wheat, or a new item such as soymilk. See the checklist of common mistakes. You are welcome to send a list of everything your daughter eats in a day for me to check for possible culprits.

**Q. There is no doubt at all in my mind about the great affect that foods have on my children although it has taken me about 3 years to accept it. But I still can not get my head around why dairy foods cause such a behavioural response with my daughter. When eating dairy foods, she gets dark rings around her eyes, and is not just bad, she is impossible to live with. I just can not understand how a food can affect her in this way. Her oppositional defiance is incredible. It is also as if she is completely deaf. Her voice becomes so loud it makes me cringe and it also becomes a lot higher in pitch. She is not affectionate at all and is very serious as well. It is as if she has complete focus, driven, locked in, intense, not able to snap out of her bad behaviour. It is only now (she is 5 1/2 years of age) that I am starting to bond with my daughter in a calm and loving way, before this it has been a desperate, lost love.**

**Since she has been dairy-free she listens, talks more quietly and without intensity, she lets me cuddle her, she does not get locked into bad behaviour and we can negotiate together. She has always been strong willed and very smart but now I can enjoy it. I am so happy now. I guess if there was a logical explanation for this huge behavioural response I would stop questioning my judgement so much. Because it is just behavioural, you can tell our peer group think it is our parenting and they also question the failsafe food idea as a bit odd. I guess what I am trying to ask is how can food affect the voice, make you deaf, fearless, and completely oppositional? - reader, Qld**

**A.** Researchers at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Clinic suggest that certain chemicals in foods cause an irritation of the nerve endings. With dairy foods, researchers at CSIRO in 1985 found that hyperactive children excrete five times more of a chemical called para-cresol than non-hyperactives. Para-cresol is a breakdown product of the amino acid tyrosine which occurs in large amounts in dairy foods. Para-cresol is known to be neurotoxic to rodents and is also permitted as an unlisted food additive in artificial flavours. Presumably, it depends which nerve endings are irritated as to which symptoms develop. There is a wide range of symptoms including loud voice, seems not to listen, temper outbursts, etc. During my bread preservative study, I noticed that loud voice was the symptom most often reported as improving by mothers, yet I have never seen it mentioned in the medical literature. If you ever get a chance to go to one of my talks, you would probably enjoy to see the "Little Monsters" video that I show of juvenile offenders in Britain - you can see the huge difference that 3 weeks of diet makes to their behaviour, and it might make you feel better to know that you are not the only one.

**Q. We just returned from a 4-day camping trip. Before we left, I made lots of bread, rolls and FAILSAFE muffins, and I packed lots of pretzels, Kettles chips, milk shake lollies, pears and red delicious apples. I would have packed some Peters vanilla ice cream if I could have figured out a way to keep it frozen! In spite of all this preparation, I still found myself frequently saying, "No, you can't have that." When we stopped at petrol stations or mini-marts, or in supermarkets or the one restaurant we ate in, my son always seemed to find something he really wanted and couldn't have. I'm just so tired of having to tell him "No", but I know I pay in the end anyway if I say "Yes". I feel I'm caught between a rock and a hard place. I'm tired of always baking, baking, baking. Sometimes, I just want to pitch this FAILSAFE diet out the window, and buy all our food at the supermarket. But I know life would not be any easier if I did. It's just hard to always have to say, "NO".**

**A.** I couldn't agree with you more. I, too, sometimes feel like shouting that everyone can eat what they like because I'm not going to all this trouble any more. But of course, it doesn't happen because we all know what the results would be. We have found that if you can buy just one treat in a roadhouses or supermarket (such as Peters Dixie Cup icecreams, or the old Peters chocolate billabong icypoles, which contained a small amount of cocoa but were otherwise FAILSAFE), then life is easy. But when there is absolutely nothing your kids can buy, then life is very difficult indeed. This is why we need to be vocal about it - to the food manufacturers' freecall numbers, politicians and especially the media. Otherwise, the situation will get worse. We live in a society where it is acceptable to drug children and even babies for food reactions like restlessness, irritability and sleep disturbance, but not acceptable to remove from our foods the additives which cause these reactions. It is time for a change. You might be interested to know that the diet and behaviour story on A Current Affair was prompted by the number of people who phoned in after each program on ADHD and said "but what about diet?" We can make a difference!

**Q. I rang the consumer hot line to find out which vegetable oil is in some biscuits my daughter loves. The oil is palm oil. Is it FAILSAFE?**

**A.** Palm oil is "probably OK". In other words, it hasn't been tested but people don't complain about it. It is not as healthy as canola oil in terms of heart disease. The biggest worry with vegetable oil is what kind of antioxidants it contains. If your daughter reacts to antioxidants

(310-321) then she is likely to react to the biscuits if she eats a lot of them, or if she eats them every day, because the reaction is dose related and cumulative. Whenever you phone a consumer hotline about oils, always remember to ask about antioxidants. They won't tell you if you don't ask!

**Q. I have been following your FAILSAFE diet for about a year after reading "Fed Up". Your book has saved my sanity and improved my 5 year old's quality of life. We are fairly strict with her diet and have a supportive teacher, which is great. My query is, do you consider the Soy Life custard to be FAILSAFE? Thanks again for all your information and hard work, we have a lovely calm daughter most of the time.**

**A.** Soy life custard is considered to be FAILSAFE, as are some dairy custards which do not contain annatto colour 60b. Note that colour 160a (betacarotene) is FAILSAFE. Any product which contains "flavours" might affect sensitive children and adults especially if eaten frequently, so watch for a slow buildup reaction.

**Q. I am wondering if your book would help my girl. I live in the US. I have tried the Feingold diet and not had much luck with it.**

**A.** First, please understand that I greatly admire Dr Ben Feingold's work and his book "Why your child is hyperactive", which nearly 30 years later, is still a thrilling story by an observant pediatrician who noticed (and was prepared to speak up) about the effects of food chemicals on children! Unfortunately, in Australia, we have noticed that the Feingold diet is often ineffective and sometimes makes children worse. This could be, among other things, because pineapples are permitted on the Feingold diet. Australians tend to consume a lot of pineapples and pineapple juice, which are rated as very high in salicylates in the latest research. This research suggests that Dr Feingold's diet fails to exclude many provoking foods, including a whole category of food chemicals called amines.

The diet that we recommend is the elimination diet from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) in Sydney. It is based on more than 20 years research and well over 20,000 patients with food intolerance. It was developed for patients with symptoms like urticaria and other itchy skin rashes, migraine and irritable bowel. Along the way, researchers noticed that it helped children with hyperactivity although that is not their main interest.

Basically, the RPAH diet excludes more than the Feingold diet: more additives, especially calcium propionate in bread, and annatto natural yellow colour; and more salicylates, as well as natural amines and natural glutamates and wheat, gluten, dairy products and soy if required. It involves a 3-6 week period of elimination of all provoking substances, followed by careful challenges of specific food chemicals as described in a research letter in the Lancet (Swain AR and others, 'Salicylates, oligoantigenic diets and behaviour', 1985; ii:41-2). At the end of three months, you should know exactly which food chemicals cause problems, what kind of problems, how long each reaction takes to start, how long each reaction lasts, and how much of a tolerance your child has for each food chemical.

**Q. Isn't the RPAH diet too hard for ordinary families?**

**A.** Here is a comment from a mother in New Hampshire who has done the RPAH diet: "My family would not have done well on the Feingold diet because we would have eaten an increased amount of the allowed fruits ... Some people talk about how your diet is too hard and how could a single mom with an ADHD child possibly cope with this kind of diet ... I think the mom would be better able to cope if she had a healthy, pleasant child to raise!!!!"

**Q. What are amines?**

**A.** Amines come from protein breakdown or fermentation and there are large amounts in cheese, chocolate, wines and fish products like canned tunafish. Amines are also found in some fruits and vegetables like bananas, citrus, avocados and tomatoes, and most nuts.

Amines can develop as a result of handling, processing or cooking methods, for example, fresh white fish and most other seafood within twelve hours of being caught is low in amines but amines will build up rapidly with time and also freezing or canning. Age, charring, slow cooking or long freezing will cause amine build up in eg beef. Chicken is low in amines but chicken skin is surprisingly high. If there are any relatives (eg grandparents, parents, uncles or aunts) with migraines or headaches, then it is a very good idea to look at amines.

**Q Can you send me a list of foods containing amines?**

**A.** I have been asked by RPAH to not put the food lists on the internet. This is because the lists alone are not enough. And I do agree with this. In our experience, no one succeeds just by getting the food lists. One small daily mistake is enough to negate the benefits of the diet.

**Q. Then how can I get more information?**

**A.** We find that the RPAH diet booklets, which are available only from dietitians, by themselves do not contain enough information and support. This is why I wrote "Fed Up". It is essentially a parents' manual for the RPAH diet with information, explanations, examples, food lists, shopping lists, recipes and suggestions. ("Fed Up: understanding how foods affect your child and what you can do about it"; Random House Australia, 1998; 351 pages; RRP \$Australian 19.95 which is about \$US12.17 at the current exchange rate; available from the Australian Online bookshop ([www.bookworm.com.au](http://www.bookworm.com.au)) at a discounted price which partially covers postage. You can also order "Fed Up" and the "Failsafe Cookbook" from Book Clearing House [www.bookch.com](http://www.bookch.com), Amazon and Barnes & Noble in the USA and Amazon in the UK. However, I would hate you to think this is simply a way of promoting my book.

If you would prefer to get the booklets from RPAH, this is how to do it. They are called "The Simplified Elimination Diet" (33 pages) and "Salicylates, Amines and Glutamates" (16 pages), cost \$A6 (US\$3.66) plus postage. You would need to write to The Allergy Service, Suite 210, 100 Carillon Avenue, Newtown NSW 2042, Australia, giving the name of your dietitian or doctor (they will not post straight to private individuals). Now you begin to see why I wrote a book about it!

As well as the information in "Fed Up", we at the Food Intolerance Network of Australia provide updates in regular free newsletters and an email discussion group to give on-going support.

**Q. My son has ADHD but we've never seen him react to any foods. Does this mean he's not affected?**

**A.** Most people whose children are affected by foods have never noticed a reaction. This is for two reasons. Firstly, most reactions are delayed. If a child drinks a can of coloured soda on Monday and reacts with temper outbursts on Wednesday, no-one will connect those two events. Secondly, children who eat foods to which they are sensitive every day will develop recurring symptoms with no obvious cause.

**Q. We've tried the Feingold diet and it didn't work.**

**A.** The Feingold diet is very different from what I call foods. Australian research shows that children are affected by more additives and more salicylate-containing foods than are excluded by the Feingold diet. As well, some people react to foods containing natural amines and flavour enhancers which are not considered at all by the Feingold diet. So for some people, the Feingold diet might not work. It may even make them worse.

**Q. My doctor says children's behaviour is not affected by food additives.**

**A.** In 1980, a group of scientists in the U.S. decided that a suggestion by Dr Feingold about the effect of food additives on children's behaviour and learning was incorrect and that few if any children are affected by food additives. The latest research shows that Dr Feingold's diet failed to exclude enough food chemicals. Since 1985 there have been many scientific studies, especially in other countries, which have shown a clear association between various foods and children's behaviour. Many doctors are unaware of these studies.

**Q. My 4 year old daughter doesn't have ADHD. When she's happy she's just perfect but she can be very demanding, with temper outbursts when she doesn't get what she wants and she sometimes takes hours to get to bed.**

**A.** The most common behavioural effects of food chemicals are irritability, restlessness, inattention and difficulty settling to sleep or night waking. Your daughter might be calmer and happier if you changed what she ate. For some people, cutting down on processed food can make a big difference, but others will need to find out exactly which food chemicals are causing the problem through careful elimination and challenge.

**Q. Wouldn't food additives be banned if they were harmful?**

**A.** Food additives are not tested for their effects on children's behaviour or learning ability. Other effects, like itchy skin rashes, asthma and irritable bowel symptoms, are well documented but regarded as minor by food regulatory authorities. Consumers who suffer from these problems are warned to avoid food additives which cause them. Unfortunately, most consumers don't realise they are affected or don't know how to avoid food additives.

**Q. How can I tell if my child might be affected by food?**

**A.** If you have ever seen your child react to any foods like colours, chocolate or party foods - even once - then this is an indication that your child might be affected in less obvious ways by other foods. A family history of migraine, eczema or irritable bowel is also a good indication of a food sensitive family.

**Q. I feel so alone. I'd love to talk to other families who are doing this. All the people I know give their ADHD children medication.**

**A.** Families using dietary management can benefit from support at least for the first few months. An email discussion group and monthly newsletters containing updates, information and answers to readers' questions are available through my website [www.fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au)

**Q. I have an eight year old son who is, according to the specialist, suffering from ADD. The specialist wants us to put him on Ritalin and various other medications. We are afraid to pump our son full of drugs ... here must be another way! My wife and I are considering changes to his diet, but the doctor says we will be wasting our time. Is this true?**

**A.** Dietary management of ADD can be extremely successful but it is difficult to do properly. One mistake a day can mean the diet will not work at all. So you have to be well-informed and committed. "Fed Up" will give you a good idea of what is involved. Eight is an excellent age to try dietary management - old enough to reason with, young enough to still have control over food.

**Q. Do amine/salicylate intolerances ever develop in adults?**

**A.** Unlike IgE-mediated allergy, food intolerance is common in both children and adults. Women are twice as likely to be affected as men. The presence of food intolerance symptoms combined with a family history of food intolerance (eg, grandparents, parents or siblings with migraine, eczema or irritable bowel) suggests that salicylate or amine intolerance is a strong possibility. A bout of gastrointestinal infection such as giardia might also be the precipitating factor. Exposure to chemicals (agricultural, industrial, solvents) is another common trigger. And of course stress can exacerbate the problem.

**Q. It seems from your book and web site that children are the main sufferers from food intolerance. However, I know a couple of adults who have intolerance problems, and while many of the symptoms are the same as for children, there appear to be some differences. For example, adults appear to have more digestive problems ("irritable bowel syndrome"), and less like hyperactivity (although some aspects are still apparent...). Has any work been done on problems common in adults and how they are different to those of children?**

**A.** Symptoms come and go and change throughout the lifespan. Everyone is different. Children and adults can suffer from irritable bowel, itchy skin rashes and respiratory problems. Adults are more likely to be irritable and restless than hyperactive. Some children who are hyperactive when young become lethargic as adults. People who have lethargy and impairment of memory and concentration are usually the most sensitive of all and are likely to react to even small quantities of a large number of food chemicals for a long time.

Further reading: Loblay RH and Swain AR. Food intolerance. In: Wahliqvist ML, Truswell AS, editors. Recent Advances in Clinical Nutrition. London: John Libbey 1986. p.169-77.

**Q. Is it possible to test for salicylate intolerance by taking aspirin?**

**A.** Salicylates are one of an enormous range of poisonous chemicals which all plants have developed in order to protect themselves. Humans have developed the capacity to detoxify many of these poisonous chemicals. However, there are commonly eaten foods containing enough of these chemicals to cause reactions in sensitive people. The most widely distributed of these chemicals is the salicylate family. Intolerance to aspirin which is a form of salicylate was first reported around the 1900s. The association of aspirin with "allergy" and cross-reactions with tartrazine (102) and benzoic acids (210-212) is well recognised. However, most people are unaware that that significant amounts of benzoates and salicylates occur naturally in many different foods such as fruits, fruit juices, vegetables, herbs, spices, nuts, wines, tea and coffee. According to researchers at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, an average Australian diet may contain up to 100 mg of natural salicylate per day. This quantity can easily trigger food intolerance symptoms when eaten daily by sensitive people. Failure to react to aspirin while on a normal diet does not exclude salicylate intolerance, since many patients will only react to a challenge after dietary salicylates have first been completely eliminated for several weeks. A 300 mg aspirin tablet can be used for the salicylate challenge, but is only recommended at teaching hospitals. Because this kind of challenge introduces a much bigger dose at one time than food challenges, asthmatics with severe bronchial hyper-reactivity are routinely hospitalised for this challenge, as well as capsule challenges with metabisulphite, MSG and tartrazine.

**Q My daughter is extremely food intolerant. She recently had an endoscopy/colonoscopy with the results being-food-induced colitis. I was wondering if you have heard of this before? Is it a fancy way of saying food intolerance?**

**A.** Your daughter is lucky to have this diagnosis. It is much more common for people to contact us with colitis for which they have been advised to take sulpha-based drugs - which sometimes make them worse - and told to eat whatever they like. When these people discover for themselves that they can control their symptoms by diet, they are usually very pleased.

**Q. We have completed the dairy challenge and failed miserably. My son exhibited severe behavioural reactions within only two days. He became extremely clingy and wouldn't leave me for regular weekly activities, having temper tantrums etc. Monstered his sister continuously, extreme defiance. Then a week later his eczema flared up badly. I continued for a week and suddenly felt just about every symptom there is, flamy throat, fuzzy head, stomach pains, gastro, short temper etc. Someone has suggested goats milk fetta cheese may possibly be OK. Is this so?**

**A.** It is unlikely that you will tolerate large quantities of it but it is worth a try. It is best not to eat it every day. People generally react more to some dairy products than others. Fresh white and cream cheeses and cream are less likely to affect you than yoghurt, cooked milk and UHT milk which are less likely to affect you than fresh milk. But that is not to say that they won't affect you. Some dairy-intolerant people can anage a small quantity of dairy foods, others can't manage any.

**Q. I have bought an Easiyo yogurt maker but we don't like the taste of the soy yoghurt sachets that they make. Do you have any other suggestions on how to use this to make my own soy yoghurt?**

**A. SOY YOHGURT**

2 tbspn water

2 tbspn gelatine

500 ml soymilk

1 tbspn starter yoghurt ( soy or dairy if you can tolerate it)

Scald (rinse with boiling water) a glass jar which will hold 500 ml. Place water in jar with gelatine and microwave 30 seconds. Stir to dissolve gelatine. Add soy milk and starter yoghurt ( soy, or dairy yoghurt if tolerated). Whisk with a fork. Leave in yoghurt maker overnight. Refrigerate.

**Q Where can I get a book containing the amount of salicylates in food (eg .06 mg in apples)?**

**A.** It's not a book, it's in a scientific paper published in the Journal of the American Dietetics Association (see page 340 in Fed Up). You can order it from your state reference library or a medical library. Although it is interesting, it will not help you much because you cannot go strictly by salicylate contents since people who react to salicylates usually react to other natural chemicals, such as benzoates. Basically, the categories of low, moderate, high and very high as defined by Royal Prince Alfred Hospital are the best you can do.

**Q. What do you mean by shallots? Are they the same as spring onions?**

**A.** Shallots are onion substitutes which are green at the top and white at the bottom, but long and thin all the way down. By comparison, spring onions have a rounded white bulb at the bottom. Shallots are failsafe, spring onions are not.

**Q. What is in a Cadbury's Double Gum Monsta? After three successful weeks on the elimination diet I let my boys have one each as a treat. Three days later we saw a "bad & sad" reaction in both boys. The nine year old is only doing the diet to keep his brother company. He is usually very confident and has lots of friends so we didn't expect him to react but even he said "I don't like myself". The seven year old wanted to hurt himself, wanted to be dead, wanted to run away from home. It was awful and so dramatic. Both boys were aware of what caused the reaction and never want to eat one again.**

**A.** Each Double Gum Monsta contains 20 doses of food additives plus artificial flavours. Of these, the additives which are likely to cause problems are: artificial flavours, colours 102 (tartrazine yellow), 110 (sunset yellow), 122 (azorubine red), 124 (Ponceau 4R brilliant scarlet), 133 (brilliant blue), 142 (brilliant green) and preservative 320 (Butylated hydroxyanisole, also known as BHA - see next question). Reactions to food additives are dose-related and theoretically, anyone will react if the dose is high enough. It is reasonable to assume that the doses in this case were fairly high.

**Q. Is there something in Ingham's chicken nuggets? My son loves them but always behaves badly afterwards.**

**A.** It is most likely that your son is reacting to antioxidant 320 (Butylated hydroxyanisole, also known as BHA) which is used as a preservative. BHA is the most widely-used antioxidant for oils and fats either alone or with a gallate (310-12) which can also cause problems. There is a lot of evidence to support the safety of BHA at likely levels of intake. It even seems to be a protection against some carcinogens. On the other hand, there are also scientific reports which cast doubt on its safety. At high levels there are frequent reports of toxicity, particularly its ability to promote forestomach cancers in rats. Humans have similar cells lining the mouth, throat and gullet. Since children who eat foods containing BHA are particularly likely to consume more than average, their parents may be wise to choose foods free from BHA. As added vitamin E or better storage and packing allow manufacturers to do without BHA, there would seem to be a good reason for limiting its use. (Reference: The New Additive Code Breaker, M Hanssen, Lothian, 1989).

**Q. Can there be a problem with Kelloggs Rice Bubble Treats? I was foolishly giving them to my son each day as I thought they were a reasonable treat. A very irritable little boy yesterday after having had them three days in a row. More settled today but not as good as he had been prior to having them. Roll on tomorrow.**

**A.** Some children are more sensitive than others. Any processed food with 'flavours' listed must be treated with suspicion for some children. That includes Kelloggs Rice Bubble Treats.

**Q. Is the Teletubbie custard sold in NZ OK? The ingredients are: skim milk, whole milk, modified maize starch, non-fat milk solids, flavour, colour 120, emulsifier 450, stabilizer 407.**

**A.** The potential trouble spots here are "flavour" (flavours are not regulated so we have no idea which one this is) and colour 120 which is cochineal. Although not listed as one of the sixty "can cause adverse effects" additives, cochineal is regarded as moderate in salicylates, so this custard is definitely not a daily item.

**Q. We are having difficulty sourcing two of the items on the shopping list detailed in "Fed Up": Macro-M Multi's and Calcium Carbonate Powder.**

**A.** Macro-Ms are available in many supermarkets and pharmacies and you should be able to order them from pharmacies. The manufacturer is Whitehall Laboratories in Punchbowl NSW and Auckland NZ. You can buy calcium carbonate as Caltrate calcium supplements available in most pharmacies. (Manufactured by Lederle Laboratories, Baulkham Hills, NSW)

**Q. I can't find a plain vitamin C tablet. Can you recommend a brand? I've resorted to taking ascorbic acid powder, but it's not very convenient.**

**A.** If you have access to Soul Pattinson's pharmacies, they stock a plain unflavoured white vitamin C tablet. Otherwise you can generally buy or order Bioglan Cal C in pharmacies.

**Q. Do you know what is in McDonalds vanilla thick shakes? My husband let my son have one last night while shopping. What a mistake! I have had the old behaviour back for the last 24 hours.**

**A.** Ingredients in MacDonald's vanilla thick shakes: "Shake mix: whole milk, sugar, skim milk powder, cream, carrageenan gum (407), guar gum (412), vegetable gum (466), mineral salt (450c), water added. vanilla shake syrup: sugar, glucose syrup, flavour, caramel colour (150), sodium benzoate (211), citric acid (330), water added" (From MacDonalds Ingredient List).

The additive above most likely to affect children (and adults) is sodium benzoate. A common reaction is irritability and a short fuse starting within 5-8 hours and lasting a day although other responses and reaction times are possible. Another problem might be flavour which is usually artificial unless 'natural' is specified, although some children react even to natural vanilla in large doses.

**Q. What's in hot dogs?**

**A.** In Watsonia frankfurts and saveloys we found:

- Preservative 250 (sodium nitrite).

Nitrites can change the nature of the red blood cells and cause breathing difficulty, pallor, dizziness or headaches. For this reason, nitrites are not permitted in foods intended for infants and young children. Nitrites can also react in the stomach to form nitrosamines which are potentially carcinogenic. Eating fresh yellow and green vegetables in the same meal is considered to give protection against stomach cancer.

- Preservative 223 (sodium metabisulphite)

Sulphites are considered to be a particular problem for asthmatics.

Treatment of food with sulphites reduces the vitamin B1 content, so is not recommended for meat products.

- Preservative 318 (sodium erythorbate)

An antioxidant like BHA and BHT.

All three of these additives have been associated with problems such as headaches, stomach aches, asthma, eczema, restlessness, irritability and sleep disturbance. Symptoms may occur a day or two after ingestion.

We found two brands of frankfurters (Watsonia and Chapman's) which contain colours, 120 and 160b annatto, not listed on the label.

Further reading: The New Additive Code-Breaker by Maurice Hanssen, Lothian, 1989 and Friendly Food by Dr Anne Swain and others, Murdoch, 1991

**Q: "Can you publish a list of which additives cause specific problems?"**

**A:** In Australia there are approximately 350 permitted food additives. While most are harmless, about 60 of these additives have been associated with adverse reactions. Effects are related to dose. Some people will react to even a tiny amount. Nearly anyone will react if the dose is high enough. Most likely to be affected are:

- children
- women of child-bearing age
- the elderly
- people with cognitive developmental disorders

As additives in our foods increase, more people will be affected. Most reactions are delayed and are therefore difficult to identify.

Before approval, these additives are tested only for their cancer-causing potential, not for their effects on health, behaviour or learning ability.

Typical reactions include:

- skin (itchy skin rashes)
- airways (asthma, stuffy or runny nose, frequent ear infections)
- gut (colic, reflux, bloating, stomach discomfort, cramps, diarrhoea, constipation, sneaky poos)
- neurobehavioural (headache, migraine, tinnitus, epilepsy, lethargy, impairment of attention, memory or concentration, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, restless legs, sleep disorders, irritability, restlessness and hyperactivity).

These additives can cause problems

- artificial colours 102, 107, 110, 122-129, 133, 142, 151, 155 plus 160(b) annatto natural colour

preservatives

- sorbic acids 200 - 203 in processed fruit, vegetables, drinks
- benzoic acids 210 - 213 in soft drinks, cordials, juice drinks
- sulphites 220 - 228 in drinks, wine, beer, bread, meat, processed foods, fruit/salad bars
- nitrates & nitrites 249 - 252 in processed meats like ham
- propionic acids 280 - 283 in bread, crumpets, buns
- antioxidants 310 - 321 in margarine, oil, chips, fries
- flavour enhancers 620 - 635, HVP in tasty foods (621 is MSG)

- added flavours in many processed foods

Any of these additives can cause any of the above reactions in a sensitive individual.

Some commonly noted reactions are:

- bread preservative (282) and irritability or mental fog
- flavour enhancer (635) and skin rashes
- colours and irritability, restlessness, sleep disturbance
- sulphites and asthma
- nitrates and stomach ache

Naturally occurring food chemicals of similar molecular size can cause the same problems.

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### **(September 2003)**

**Q: Has anyone tried failsafe for Lupus?**

**A:** Yes, the Illawarra failsafe group reports great success with both Lupus and arthritis. More details from Bernard: [btrudget@ozemail.com.au](mailto:btrudget@ozemail.com.au).

**Q: I read about Lactobacillus GG, probiotics and Vaalia yoghurt in your book 'Fed Up with Asthma'. Are you aware that Vaalia yogurt contains natural colour 160b?**

**A:** You should be able to get Vaalia natural yoghurt which is colour-free. It is only the vanilla and fruit-flavoured Vaalia yoghurts which contain 160b. Please let me know if your Woolworths supermarket refuses to stock Vaalia natural (give the location of the supermarket).

**Q: Sometimes I have this uneasy feeling when I breathe, it is as if I am on a plane flying at 40 000 feet and having that dry feeling in your throat and eyes. I keep thinking that it must be something that I eat or drink. I have had it after a fruitcake and also from raisin bread. My daughter avoids cask wine for the same reason.**

**A:** For breathing problems within 15 minutes of food or drink, suspect sulphites (220-228). Raisins and dried fruit such as cherries and artificial cherries in fruit cakes etc may contain sulphites. Wine is the other most common source of sulphites. Asthmatics who see an occasional reaction to sulphited foods are probably affected more than they realise.

**Q: I came across the new Cottees Lemonade the supermarket today, and was wondering if it is failsafe? The ingredients are carbonated water, sugar, food acid 330, natural flavour.**

**A:** These ingredients are the same as in 7UP and Schweppes lemonade. The natural flavour is lemon juice, which contains both salicylates and amines. For the elimination diet, the RPA recommended limit is 150 mls per week (less than one glass). In my experience, most parents give more than that and then complain that their children react. Best to save it for treats such as birthday parties.

**Q: We live on a farm in WA and I am planning for the whole family to do the Elimination Diet. I am determined to persevere this time, nearly 5 years after our first attempt. I think the best way for me to ensure we stick at it is to do a thorough menu plan, including lunch boxes and snacks; to do a big shop in Perth for food and non food items; discuss incentives and rewards before commencing; clear my diary of all unnecessary time-consuming, stress-inducing appointments, meetings etc; advise the school and other relevant people; keep a food and behaviour diary; communicate frequently with the dietitian. Have I missed anything? Is Amway still OK for washing clothes and Imperial Leather for personal soap? (I see toothpaste is available by mail order). We buy our meat in bulk (about every 3 months). Our butcher cooks a chook for me on the rotisserie without anything added. I use the white meat only (no skin) for the children's lunches. Is this OK?**

**A:** It all sounds good except the meat. Meat should be cooked the day you buy it or frozen and used within 4 weeks. If you pass your amine challenge you can go back to buying in bulk every three months.

**Q: A few months ago, I developed a cough and tight chest which got worse and now I have been diagnosed with asthma for the first time in my life (I am 35). I am on a weight loss diet and have been snacking every day on a mixture of dried fruit and nuts. I saw your factsheet about asthma and muesli bars. Could dried fruit cause chronic asthma?**

**A:** Dried fruit such as apples, apricots and coconut contain sulphur dioxide (220 also called sulphites). Sulphites are strongly associated with asthma. It is possible for some people to develop chronic steroid-dependent asthma simply by eating dried fruit in muesli bars or trail mix nearly every day. If cutting out the trail mix doesn't help, you may need to investigate the effects of other food chemicals including salicylates (more details in Fed Up with Asthma).

**Q: Is there a failsafe lipbalm?**

**A:** I haven't found one yet. I use vaseline. Any suggestions from readers?

**Q: My problem has been a severe burning sensation on my face, especially temples and nose, on and off for the past year. I have recently started the failsafe diet and on the salicylate challenge my skin became so painful and my face was swollen, that I had to use liberal amounts of cortisone cream. I work in a shoe shop and have always had a bad reaction while at work. As soon as I leave work I have no discomfort. This happened on the challenge, but the reaction was only on that day that I worked. I have not had such a bad reaction since, but even this week, there was a slight tingling on my skin, but only while I was at work. Could my reaction be coming from something at work?**

**A:** Exposure to toxic chemicals (such as the glues and solvents used in shoe manufacture) can sensitize you to other chemicals including food chemicals. You can identify occupational exposure because of the timing: your symptoms will occur at work, (or for asthma, more often on work nights) and stop during holidays. If you continue to be exposed at work, eventually your symptoms will become irreversible. The best cure is to change your job. Easy to say, hard to do, but you run the risk of becoming far more sensitive if you don't. See the Fumes and Perfumes factsheet on the website and the section on occupational exposure in Fed Up with Asthma.

**Q: I have been reading some information about a new milk product called A2 milk that will soon be available in Victoria. Do you know anything about it?**

**A:** If you can tolerate cows or goats milk, A2 (it's a form of milk protein called beta-casein) will be suitable for you. Most milk in the world is A2 milk - Asian and African cows milk, goats milk, yak milk etc. Most milk in Western countries is not A2, except for occasional breeds such as Guernsey cows. There is some interesting research suggesting that A2 milk is better

for health in a number of areas, including autism and heart disease. It would be relatively easy to convert Western milk to A2 if dairy farmers wanted to do it. You can read all about it by doing a google search: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) SEARCH "A2 milk"

**Q: Are there any failsafe worm tablets?**

**A:** None of the standard pharmaceutical treatments are failsafe but one reader's pharmacist recommended large doses of garlic - three cloves a day, with the garlic in the biggest chunks the child can swallow, to allow pieces of garlic to actually get right through the intestines (Nuttelex on the lumps makes it easier to get down) plus four odourless garlic tablets a day, plus a multivitamin supplement (we recommend Macro M or Amcal). He also recommended no sugar for a week although you can have permitted fruit.

**Q: I am 5.5 months pregnant and have had chronic insomnia since being pregnant. I have gone to a sleep clinic and am beginning to think that my insomnia is closing related to MSG. I have been keeping a sleep diary and it appears that on the nights after I go out for lunch or dinner I may not sleep at all or only get a few hours sleep. Just recently I bought Woolies BBQ chicken not realising this would contain MSG, both nights after these chickens I did not sleep at all. Ever since becoming pregnant I have been going out to lunches an awful lot, so I can look back and say 'yes 3 times a week, no sleep, yes could MSG be the problem here?' Do you know of anyone else that has insomnia from MSG? I find I am thirsty, have nightmares, have developed a rash on my calves and do not fall asleep. It is very hard to find out which restaurant foods may contain MSG. Do you have a list?**

**A:** Other people are affected by MSG too, see Reader's story 'Bad insomnia caused by MSG and preservatives'. For detailed information about how to avoid MSG, see pages 193-196 in Fed Up with Asthma. Since you developed a rash after eating Woolies chicken, I would also suspect ribonucleotides (flavour enhancers 635, 627 and 631). If avoiding MSG and ribonucleotides doesn't stop your insomnia, you may want to try the failsafe diet to see if other food chemicals are contributing to your problem.

**Q: Are Neways products failsafe?**

**A:** You will have to judge each product individually. The Radiance toothpaste without peppermint oil (there are two Radiance toothpastes) is OK without the mouthwash. The only other products I have tried (shampoos and conditioner) are not failsafe because they contained very high salicylates in ingredients such as tangelo oil, despite the 'fragrance free' label. I normally use Palmolive Naturals shampoo and conditioner for normal hair, available from supermarkets. They are not 100% failsafe but I can tolerate them, unlike the Neways products. Dermaveen shampoo and conditioner from pharmacies are 100% failsafe.

**Q: My baby is 4 1/2 months old. He's never been a great sleeper and since I started him on solids three weeks ago at least one breastfeed a day is a nightmare - he will drink for a minute or two then pull off and scream and arch his back. People told us he would be more settled on solids! I've given him potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, apple and avocado and I can't say I've noticed any of these really affecting him. Can you suggest what foods I should be giving him?**

**A:** Some babies are more sensitive than others. You won't always see an immediate reaction but effects build up. Apple and especially avocado are not great for babies with food intolerance because they are high in natural chemicals called salicylates. Homemade baby rice cereal (cooked and blended rice) is generally very safe and you could try potatoes and baby pear. Bananas are good unless your baby reacts to natural food chemicals called amines. If you are breastfeeding you may have to change your own diet too. There are more details in The Failsafe Cookbook, or you could see a dietitian.

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**(June 2003)**

**Q. I had two sips from a bottle of the new Pepsi Blue and within 30-40 seconds I became violently ill. I was taken to hospital and it took me approximately ten days to recover fully.**

A. Pepsi Blue contains two artificial colours, Allura red 129 and Brilliant Blue (133, Blue #1). Except for ribonucleotides (flavour enhancer 635), it is very unusual to experience a ten day reaction to food additives, but we have once before received a report of a dramatic ten-day reaction to Brilliant Blue.

**Q. We have been doing to the diet now for 2.5 weeks and we are really struggling. My daughter's behaviour seems to be a little worse than before, crying, pains in tummy, tantrums, irritable, and my son is very grumpy. I have read stories/frequently asked questions and I may be feeding them too many LCM's ( only 1 per day). I have just discovered that Helgas ( which we have been living on) is not failsafe! ... I'm now off to Brumbys.**

A. The diet will not work if you make mistakes. Read the Checklist of Common Mistakes on the website. I don't recommend any LCMs until your children have already turned into angels, and even then, be careful. Many children can't manage them. If they set up a craving, avoid them. It is also essential to get your bread right.

**Q. We have definitely seen an improvement overall in my son at school since going failsafe, but not a total elimination of all behavior issues, just more tolerable - so it may mean we haven't gotten it all yet. How much vanilla is too much? My children have vanilla in cookies, vanilla flavoured soy milk and icecream.**

A. Vanilla is supposed to be limited to 2 drops per day, but if the diet isn't working 100 per cent for you, try cutting it all out for a few weeks, and especially the vanilla flavoured soydrink.

**Q. Mannateck Phytobears changed my daughter into a squealy, unsociable little two year old. What's in them?**

A. Phytobears are very high in salicylates and/or amines (in broccoli, cauliflower, kale, tomato, turnip, onion, carrot, papaya, pineapple, ambrotose, aloe barbadensis, larix decidua, astragalus gummifer, anogeissue latifolia) and also contain annatto 160b natural colour, the only natural colour which affects some kids as badly as artificial colours although it is often a next day grumpy reaction. A few people have reported that their children improve on phytobears - they must be kids who don't react to salicylates, amines or annatto.

**Q. Are you able to help me with ideas on how to change school lunch order choices? My daughter's school has a terrible list (party pies and choc donuts).**

A. See the website for the School Tuckshop Factsheet. People say it is very helpful.

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**(April 2003)**

**Q. My son is 4 years old and he has been diagnosed with borderline ADHD and the children's doctor has recommended I take him off all preservatives and colours. I am wondering if there is a list of what preservatives are the best to avoid?**

**A.** It is good to hear that doctors are now recommending avoidance of food additives. However, children with ADHD are equally likely to be affected by natural food chemicals called salicylates. It would have been more helpful for your doctor to refer you to a failsafe-friendly dietitian for a 3-week trial of the elimination diet (a list of failsafe-friendly dietitians is available, ask us).

**Q. My butcher is going to try and make bacon or corned beef without nitrates. Its all too complicated for me but am happy to let him try BUT he needs to know if he can use saltpetre. Have you ever heard of this? He said this is what butchers would have used before nitrates. He wonders if it is nitrates under an old fashioned name.**

**A.** Saltpetre is an alternative name for potassium nitrate and Chile saltpetre is an alternative name for sodium nitrate. Both are naturally occurring minerals used in the manufacture of gunpowder, in metallurgy, as a fertiliser, preservative, colour-fixer and curing salt. Potassium nitrate can also be artificially manufactured. Saltpetre is not failsafe. If you have passed your amine challenge, you can do a nitrate challenge (large serves of bacon or corned beef every day for three days while otherwise failsafe) to see whether you react.

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## **(February 2003)**

**Q. The front page of your website lists frequent nose bleeds as an FI symptom. Under what conditions do these nose bleeds occur and what foods seem to be implicated? My wife gets unexplained nosebleeds fairly often. Her doctor can find nothing as a cause.**

**A.** In my experience, dairy foods are a big contributor, but everyone is different so you would have to consider the usual suspects (additives, salicylates etc).

**Q.** How can I eat well and stay sane at the same time? I would like to lose a bit of the weight that I have put on in the last 12 months and altogether I need to lose about 8 kgs.

**A.** See the new factsheet on the website, Failsafe Weight Loss, I've tried it and it works.

**Q. Our pediatrician recommended Fergon elixir iron supplement. I was wondering if my daughter can take this while on the elimination diet? This supplement contains Glucose liquid, Ethanol and Saccharin Sodium.**

**A.** You can't trust labels on pharmaceutical products, because they don't have to declare all additives. Here are the actual contents of Fergon, as listed on the CMI (Consumer Medication Information sheet), available in the packet or at [www.myDr.com.au](http://www.myDr.com.au) :

Active Ingredient: Ferrous Gluconate 300mg in 5mL

Other Ingredients: Glucose Liquid, Glycerol, Ethanol (alcohol), Saccharin Sodium, Gluconolactone, Apricot Superarome, Water - Purified

The strong apricot flavour ('super-aroma') is not failsafe. All strong fruit flavours are very high in salicylates.

For more details, see the new Supplements factsheet on the website.

**Q. In the last 2 or 3 months, my stomach has been almost continuously bloated. On occasions the amount of gas in my stomach is so extreme that I have to force myself to burp to relieve the pressure in my stomach. I doubt that my diet is a problem as my wife and I eat low fat and very healthy. I am an otherwise healthy 31 year old non**

**smoker and very mild drinker. However, I have recently begun chewing 'x.cite' chewing gum several times a day, ingredients: maltitol, gum base, flavour, thickener 414, emulsifier (322, from soy), colour 171, sweeteners (951, 950), glazing agent 903, antioxidant 320. Do you think that the gum may be the reason for my problem?**

**A.** Maltitol can cause the problems you mention. Sugar alcohols including maltitol, sorbitol (420), mannitol (421), xylitol (967), glycerin (422) and hydrogenated glucose syrup (965) are used in 'sugar-free' chewing gum and candies and in low joule or carbohydrate modified food including icecreams and jams. Although sugar alcohols are chemically related to sugars, they are not as sweet, don't cause tooth decay and are poorly absorbed into the blood stream. This poor absorption means they can work their way through the digestive tract, causing bloating, abdominal pain and severe diarrhoea. The FDA requires a warning about 'laxative effects' on foods containing more than 50 grams. The trouble is, consumers are affected by a lot less than that. In 1999, the Centre for Science in the Public Interest ([www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)) petitioned the FDA to require foods containing more than one gram or more to bear a label stating: 'This product contains sorbitol (or whatever) which may cause diarrhoea, bloating and abdominal pain...'. No response from the FDA so far.

**Q. Thanks for your website. I was excited to see your section on "Additives around the world" listed but sorry not to see a section about France.**

**A.** I didn't write much about France because the food is so good there! French people seem very aware that fresh food is best, most seem to be against American-style food, and very few additives are used as far as I could see. French bread is excellent. Of course, if you buy American-style foods then you will have problems with the same additives as everyone else. You do need to be aware of additives in medication. There are many articles in French medical journals about this - and again, French doctors seem to be more aware of the problems than most - see article about asthma and benzoates in the last newsletter.

**Q. I notice that you don't include Helga's in your list of preservative free breads, however according to the label it contains only emulsifiers - is there something else in there?**

**A.** Helga's bread usually contains either vinegar (which is not failsafe) or extras such as linseed and corn which are not failsafe. If you only have to avoid propionates it is OK.

**Q. My 5 yr old son has Williams Syndrome. What I have read on your web page sounds like my son since birth. He has a learning disability but we have also experienced behavioral, sleeping and feeding problems and he never relaxes even while watching TV. Does the diet work for this syndrome?**

**A.** It is possible to have food intolerance by itself or in association with a number of conditions. If your child's behaviour is related to food intolerance, then the failsafe diet will help. There are failsafe families using the diet successfully for children with Fragile X Syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Porphyria and Down Syndrome as well as ADHD, PDD (pervasive developmental disorder), learning disabilities, autism, ODD (oppositional defiant disorder) and CD (both conduct disorder and coeliac disease). The diet will take care of the food-related symptoms but you may need other interventions such as behaviour management, special education, speech or motor-sensory programs. Parents usually find that other interventions are much more effective once the diet has kicked in. See Factsheet - FI and Behaviour.

**Q. Can you please give us more info on the asthma meds. Our son is on maximum dosage, what are the alternatives????????????**

A. You might like to look at what he eats - see my new book "Fed Up with Asthma".

**Q. My daughter is allergic to sulphites, and we have had some very scary and life threatening moments. She is being treated at the allergy clinic but I can't seem to find any detailed information on sulphites.**

A. See sulphite list in the asthma feature on the website, and the "how to avoid sulphites" section in my book Fed Up with Asthma.

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**(September 2002)**

**Q. My failsafe son has a very bad cold at the moment and I can't seem to find any thing to help ease his symptoms - do you have any recommendations?**

A. See the Failsafe Cookbook page 174 for home remedies. Basically, drink lots of fluids - warm magic cordial is excellent - and squirt warm salty water up the nose to unblock. Avoid coloured or preserved syrups and medications. You might like to try white Panadol tablets for pain, Bisolvon white tablets - not elixir - to dissolve mucous and another failsafe possibility is Claratyne white antihistamine tablets, which will dry everything up.

**Q. My question is about annatto colour (160b). We get vegetarian sausages (have been vegetarian since birth) from Sanitarium which have annatto and carrageenan (both listed as "natural" additives) in them. When I phoned Sanitarium they said they weren't aware of any negative reactions with either and were, therefore, not prepared to substitute them for something considered safer. I was wondering what annatto is and what reactions to annatto have been reported.**

A. Annatto is a yellow colour made from the seed coat of a tropical tree. It is one of 50 additives identified by researchers at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as most likely to cause adverse reactions. American researchers found more people with urticaria reacted to annatto than to any artificial colours. This network receives frequent complaints about effects of annatto including headaches, headbanging in young children, behaviour problems and even arthritis. Beta carotene (160a) is a safe alternative and is used widely in Europe but our national food authority tells food manufacturers that it is too difficult and expensive to use 160a. See factsheet on website.

**Q. I have a autistic and hyperactive son with a lot of challenging behavior. I have read about your research on the internet. When I went to the bakery to buy bread, I was told that it has no 282 but it does have another preservative, is it alright to give my son?**

A. Bread preservative 282 is not the only food chemical which can cause behaviour problems but for many families it is one of the worst. You can try bread without 282. If your son still has problems, I suggest you read my books Fed Up or the Failsafe Cookbook.

**Q. I recently purchased some rice pasta from Freedom Foods. It has Inulin (dietary fibre ) in the ingredients. Do you know what this is derived from? Is it safe?**

A. Inulin is a starch derived from the root of a lily. It is highly refined, like cornflour, and thus failsafe, we would have thought. However, there has been one possible adverse reaction reported from a very sensitive member of the network.

**Q. Can you recommend a non-toxic way of sealing a timber floor?**

**A.** Bio Paints do natural organic varnishes as well as paints, freecall 1800 809 448 for information and free coloured brochure. Try also Berger "Breathe Easy" brand.

**Q. My doctor says that if my son's behaviour can be controlled by diet, it's not ADHD.**

**A.** Your doctor's information is out of date. He needs to read "Diet, ADHD and behaviour: a quarter-century review" by the highly regarded and unbiased (that is, not industry-funded) Centre for Science in the Public Interest. You can download the 40-page report from their website ([www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)) or see my website for a summary.

**Q. Can you tell me if tonic water and soda water are OK? (ie: gin and tonic, scotch and soda) and if these alcohol mixes should be limited (from a chemical rather than an alcohol point of view)?**

**A.** Soda water should be OK, tonic water varies. Schweppes is preservative-free, Kirklands is not and don't drink tonic water on tap. *Purely from a food chemical point of view*, gin and preservative-free tonic and scotch and soda are unlimited ...

**Q. I was so impressed by the change in my son's behaviour just by going failsafe that I would like to lobby the school where he attends to change the foods sold from the canteen. I am really dedicated to making these changes as I believe that even by changing the breads used you can make a huge difference to kids' behaviour. What is your opinion of how to approach the committee?**

**A.** You might like to print out the tuckshop factsheet on the website. It includes: CSPI recommendations that schools should minimise their use of behaviourally harmful additives; a story about a school that achieved great success by banning additives; and a suggested low additive tuckshop list with some failsafe options. A ban on colours, MSG and the bread preservative is achievable and worthwhile.

**Q. Are there any failsafe moisturisers?**

**A.** Look for products without perfume. Sorbolene is the product best tolerated by very sensitive people. See also the Q.V. range by Ego Pharmaceuticals, and the Dermaveen range by Dermatech.

**Q. Isn't canola oil dangerous?**

**A.** This might be an urban legend running wild on the internet. See <http://www.urbanlegends.com/ulz/canola.html>

**Q. What is your personal opinion of medication for ADHD?**

**A.** I agree with the CSPI report (see [www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)): parents should be warned of the adverse effects of medication, offered the option of diet, and use medication as a last resort rather than the first and often only option.

**Q. I've been doing the failsafe diet with my son for two weeks. Already he seems to be less angry and has more self control. Two days ago he had king prawns for tea and today he seems more uptight again. What is it in prawns that causes this reaction?**

**A.** Prawns - and most seafood - are high in amines. The only exceptions are very fresh white fleshed fish (not tuna or salmon) and white fleshed seafood, eg fresh crab, lobster, calamari, scallops and oysters. Caviar is very high in amines.

**Q. Is sake failsafe?**

**A.** Sake is low in salicylates but contains amines.

**Q. What's the colour that makes some egg yolks much darker than others? My son seems to react to them.**

**A.** I am waiting for a reply from the Australian egg industry. In Britain, chicken feed often contains canthaxanthin (E161g), citranaxanthin (E161i) and beta apo81 carotenol (E160). See for yourself what it does to the eggs - [http://www.iceland.co.uk/Ext\\_11/web/Market.nsf/\(WebSearch\)/CusEggs/](http://www.iceland.co.uk/Ext_11/web/Market.nsf/(WebSearch)/CusEggs/) . Also see two interesting articles about colours fed to chickens, fish (farmed salmon) and animals to enhance the colour their eggs or flesh, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk> and search for canthaxanthin.

**Q. My son refuses to have any vegetables.**

**A.** Have you tried vegetable soup? I started with just potato, cabbage and salt blended well so you couldn't tell what was in it, no lumps. My kids only had to lick the tiniest amount off one teaspoon (just touch it with their tongue) the first night to get a reward - a small toy. The next night they had to have more (lick a small amount off the teaspoon) to get another small toy. The next night it was twice as much and so on. By the end of two weeks they would eat a mug of vegetable soup. Then we cut out the rewards and established the most important rule of the house - no dinner until soup is eaten. Since then they have eaten vegetable soup nearly every night of their lives. My 19 yo daughter has been living away from home for a year now. She cooks failsafe vegetable soup once a week, freezes it in one serve portions and has a cup every night. My 16 yo eats a huge serving of soup every day. I can put any failsafe vegetable in the soup including Brussels sprouts, lentils and dried beans and he will eat it without complaint.

**Q. Which book of yours should I buy?**

**A.** My books are all different and they are all worth reading. Failsafers tell me that The Failsafe Cookbook is the best one to start on because it is so clear and easy to follow.

**Q. We live in SE Asia and the only golden syrup we can get is Tate and Lyle's from the UK. Is that failsafe?**

**A.** I haven't seen Tate and Lyle golden syrup for years, but Rebecca used to react to it. It must contain salicylates. It tastes better than CSR, and the rule is "if you like it, you can't have it". Stick with CSR golden syrup or see the FS Cookbook page 161, for mock maple syrup. You can use that instead but omit the vanilla if your child hasn't turned into an angel yet.

**Q. We'd like to break the diet occasionally but not too much. Can you recommend some not-too-bad treats?**

**A.** Everyone is different. It depends what affects you the worst. You have to work it out for yourself. We always avoid additives. Dairy foods are the least of my problems but amines (and salicylates) are bad so a treat for me is a chocolate covered icecream like an eskimo pie. I can manage the occasional slice of rockmelon or watermelon but a whole serve of commercial fruit salad isn't worth the consequences. My daughter can manage some dairy foods, has to be even more careful of salicylates but can manage amines. She sticks to her diet strictly for weeks before important occasions (like exams and performances) then will have a treat like a Sara Lee Chocolate Pudding, Chocolate Bavarian, caramel top n fill on icecream, or Paul's custard (with 169a). She also likes to have a few Dick Smith's shortbread cream biscuits every so often, but she doesn't eat sweets like Werther's original butter candy, Fantaes or Pascall's Chocolate Eclairs because they set up a craving. However, my son and

I can eat these as occasional treats. Some failsafers recommend Fads (used to be Fags, imitation cigarettes) and Chuppa Chups cola flavoured - as once a month treats.

**Q. Is white chocolate failsafe?**

**A.** White chocolate does not contain any cocoa product, so it won't contain amines to the same extent as brown chocolate. RPA cautiously restrict the amount allowed as they're not sure and the milk itself (because it's 'aged') will probably contain amines. "Flavours" in both white and brown chocolate can be a problem.

**Q. Is Sanitarium Organics Simply Soy milk safe or is it too high in salicylates as it contains raw cane sugar?? The ingredients are "Organic whole soy beans, organic raw cane sugar, food acid 332, mineral (calcium phosphate), filtered water added".**

**A.** Not failsafe, sorry. Raw sugar is moderate in salicylates which is definitely not OK if you are drinking it constantly. The fresh Sanitarium So Good with linseed is not failsafe either. The UHT version is failsafe.

**Q. On the weekend I gave my 10 yo son a Hungry Jack's strawberry thickshake and fries and within an hour he was extremely rude (threw money at me at the shopping centre because I would not buy him an iced donut). This behaviour happened a few weeks ago after the same food so obviously he won't be getting that again. I wondered if you knew of major problems with these foods?**

**A.** I couldn't find a Hungry Jack's ingredient list on the internet but because he reacted so quickly, your son's reaction is most likely due to artificial colouring in the milkshake. It could be any of the red colours 122, 123, 124, 127 or 129 and possibly some tartrazine as well (102). You might like to reply to the petition above! Also possible is an antioxidant from the range 310-312 or 319-320 in the fries, but these usually cause irritability the next day.

**Q. What is it about Weetbix that affects children?**

**A.** I wish I knew. I used to think it was salicylates in the raw sugar, but my daughter reacts even worse to VitaBrits which are sugar free. RPA suggested it could be the wholegrain wheat. A few people report that LiteBix are better.

**Q. When our son went to university, he started eating several packets of Burger Rings a day and drinking lots of Diet Coke. He developed a facial tic and failed all subjects. We've never had those kinds of foods at home. Could they have anything to do with his problems?**

**A.** Burger Rings contain the following unsafe additives: colours (102,110,155), antioxidant (319) and MSG (621). Diet Coke contains preservative (211) and artificial sweetener (951). All of the additives above have been associated with adverse reactions by RPA except 951 which has not been tested but is not recommended. Common reactions to food additives include restlessness and inattention which can obviously result in student failure. Tics are less common reactions to food chemicals.

**Q. I've just spent more than \$200 on a psychiatrist. I told him my son had gone ballistic after eating Chinese takeaway (we ate the meal one day and the leftovers the next day). He told me there was no evidence that food affects children's behaviour, and mentioned a study at the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Have I wasted my money?**

**A.** Your psychiatrist was referring a study which tested only food colouring and found that parents could not distinguish the effects of colours from placebo. Excluding food additives alone is not helpful for the majority of ADHD children, so challenges must be carried out during a comprehensive elimination diet. There are many highly successful studies, including

two at Great Ormond Street (Egger and others, 1985, Carter and others 1993) which avoided more foods. I suggest you send your psychiatrist a copy of the press release about diet and children's behaviour from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest [www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)

**Q. I'd like to write a book about my experiences. Can you give me any hints?**

**A.** Writing is time-consuming and poorly paid. The Australian Society of Authors ([www.asauthors.org](http://www.asauthors.org)) calculate that authors are paid less per hour than any other occupational group including fruit-pickers. I would have made more from one year of teaching than from 2 best-selling books over 8 years. Publishing houses pocket 90% of the RRP, so the author gets about \$2 for a \$20 book. You keep a lot more of the profit if you self-publish, but the publishing houses get bigger distribution so spread the word much better. Only about 1% of manuscripts submitted to publishers are accepted. See the Writers and Artists Yearbook in your library for information about publishers.

**Q. What's in Coke? I'm addicted to it and I'm sure it's bad for me.**

**A.** Most people blame caffeine, which is a drug and does cause addiction. The definition of addiction is doing something that makes you feel good until it makes you feel bad. Caffeine can cause anxiety, jitters and agitation. Some people are more sensitive than others. Diet Coke contains aspartame artificial sweetener (951) which is very addictive for some people. It also contains sodium benzoate preservative (211), one of the worst preservatives. People who drink a lot - sometimes one can/hour or up to 7 litres a day - are exposed to very high doses. Coca-cola is free of aspartame and preservatives but the flavours include essential oils of lemon, orange, nutmeg and cinnamon, so it is high in salicylates (about the same salicylates as a glass of juice), especially in large quantities. If you want to support the Coca-Cola company, buy Mt Franklin spring water. Use soda bicarb to overcome cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

**Q. What exactly are those kids eating on the cover of the Failsafe Cookbook?**

**A.** It was a ham and tomato roll - not failsafe, but it's a great photo. So I asked the graphic artist to make the ham look like chicken and the tomato look like beetroot which is moderate in salicylates. I would prefer the lettuce to be iceberg but you can't have everything.

**Q. Where is the evidence that whey powder is a natural form of calcium propionate (282)?**

**A.** Bonita Glatz, professor of food science at Iowa State University, describes the disadvantage of propionic acids used as a preservative: "The pure acid or propionic salt must be labelled as a preservative when added to a food, thus precluding the use of the desirable term "all natural". She then provides an option: "Alternatively, the propionibacteria may be grown in a natural medium such as milk or cheese whey and the entire medium ... may be dried and used as a natural preservative". *Ref: Glatz, B. "The classical propionibacteria: their past, present and future as industrial organisms" American Society for Microbiology News, 1992, vol 58, no 4, 199-200.*

**Q. Help. Where do I start?**

**A.** This is definitely the most frequently asked question. Write down everything your child normally eats in a day. Now check whether they are failsafe by going the list of failsafe foods (in the booklet from your dietitian, also page 206 Fed Up, page 195 FS Cookbook) or the recipes. If not, write down a substitute for each food. For example, breakfast: Nutrigrain. Not failsafe. Use Rice Bubbles or rolled oats instead. Raw sugar. Not failsafe. Use white sugar instead. Milk. Decide whether you will include milk or not (eg if frequent ear infections, switch to Vitasoy Calciplus). Toast. Read label on bread and switch to preservative-free bread. Margarine. Read label and switch to Nuttelex. Vegemite. Not failsafe. Switch to golden syrup, pear jam, or Nuttelex with sprinkle of salt. Eggs. Failsafe. Pancakes. Failsafe. Read label on

maple syrup and switch to pure. Vitamins. Throw out chewable child tablets and switch to Macro M or Amcal One-a-Day. Morning tea. Fruit. Not failsafe. Switch to peeled ripe soft and juicy pear, or read through snack suggestions in the recipe section and choose something your child will like. Eg. Saltine crackers with nuttelex, or Margie's lunchbox muffins ... and so on. If you have the FS Cookbook, read "How to Start" on page 18 and the Checklist of Common Mistakes on page 207 (or on the website). Any questions, join the discussion group, phone your local contact, or email me for support.

**Q. Help! Where do I start?**

**A.** Thanks to a reader for this answer: "I think the biggest hurdle is that first shopping trip. I picked out several recipes I wanted to try, and carefully reviewed the list of acceptable foods. I made sure I put all the ingredients I needed for the recipes on my shopping list, along with acceptable foods, including goodies like chips, pretzels and ice cream. At the supermarket it did take a long time to find all the new things I was buying, but when I got home, I had a kitchen full of failsafe products and all the ingredients I needed for some failsafe recipes. Having all those things in the house made following the diet a lot easier. I'm such an organizational freak that I have my shopping list on the computer. I print out copies and post them on the refrigerator; then I check off the things I need as they run out. On the back, I print out the additives to avoid, so I always have it with my shopping list when I'm shopping."

**Q. We have just done the amine challenge with our children. My three-year-old daughter reacted but my son actually improved. How can this be?**

**A.** It is not unusual for non-responders to improve during challenges. There can be three reasons for this: 1) normal improvement over time. Improvements on this diet will continue for about 9 months if the diet isn't broken eg by challenges 2) Challenge foods such as bananas and chocolate have replaced small "treats" or mistakes with problems such artificial flavours. 3) Avoidance of a staple which has been causing problems, eg a boy who improved dramatically during the dairy challenge because he had been reacting to soymilk.

**Q. I have a child - not diagnosed - with some behavioural problems. Currently I am working with his doctor using behaviour management and his teacher using diet to try to tone down or eliminate the behaviour problems. Any tips or dietary recommendations would be appreciated.**

**A.** I presume your son's teacher has noticed the effects of foods on your son sometimes. Artificial food colours generally cause the most obvious problems. However, if your son reacts to colours, then he probably also reacts to a wide range of other food chemicals with effects which are more subtle, delayed and difficult to identify. I would immediately remove the bread preservative calcium propionate (282) from his diet (you also have to avoid whey powder, which is a natural source of this additive). Brumbys bread is safe if there is one near you and I believe Sunicrust makes preservative-free bread. Have you heard of salicylates? If not, I suggest you read my book "Fed Up", available in most libraries and bookshops, and in particular, have a good look at chapter eight, "What's wrong with fruit and other healthy foods?" Salicylates are natural chemicals in most fruit and some vegetables, which can cause behaviour problems in about 75% of children with irritability, restlessness, inattention or difficulty falling asleep. Hard to believe but true, as this mother reports: "Since purchasing your book "Fed Up" and reading through it last week I immediately cut back my 5 yo daughter's intake of fruit to approximately one quarter of what she would normally have. By the weekend we already saw huge changes in our girl. Her behaviour was more evened out (not so many HUGE highs and lows) and just more sensible, obliging, less aggressive and defiant - just a much more pleasant girl altogether."

**Q. How am I going to do the amine challenge? I'm sure my kids won't eat dark chocolate.**

**A.** Buy some Nestle dark chocolate Choc Bits in your supermarket baking section. I will be very surprised if your kids don't eat those. They need to eat about 60 grams a day. You can make the lunchbox choc chip muffins, Fed Up page 230, as a loaf (put in extra choc chips and bake for one hour) and slather it with a thick layer of chocolate icing, using pure cocoa powder and pure icing sugar. With challenges it is terribly important to eat enough, right from the start. If you don't use chocolate the results are likely to be confusing. As well as chocolate, eat at least 2 ripe bananas a day. Bananas go well in milk or soyshakes or frozen on a stick and dipped in homemade chocolate sauce, or in banana cake. Don't forget you can also eat tinned fish like tuna in springwater, lots of gravy with roasts and pawpaw, which also goes well in milkshakes. Reactions are often delayed, day 3 or later. Stop as soon as you see a reaction. If you are not totally sure because of other factors like bullying, wait for three good days and start again.

**Q. Shallots in WA shops are small brown onions which look like pickling onions from the outside but inside are pinky white- are these ok ?**

**A.** The shallots we mean are like thin leeks, green at the top and white at the bottom but with no onion-like bulb. In the US they are called green onions, in some states spring onions.

**Q. My 5 yo son has been invited to a birthday party at Macdonalds. What do you recommend?**

**A.** You might like to try this reader's approach: "My son is in kindergarten and has been invited to three Macdonalds parties this year. At the first one he ate everything and it resulted in hyperactive behaviour and tantrums. For the next two he ate only the chicken nuggets, chips and drank water. I supply the lollybag, and tell him not to eat the icecream cake - which seems fine with him. We haven't had a problem with this." Some children will react the next day to the antioxidants in the oil. Minimise the amount he eats by feeding him just before he arrives. Then what he will eat most of is your approved lollybag, and he will be happy about going to parties.

**Q. I am curious as to what kind of behaviour a 2 1/2-year-old child might exhibit due to an intolerance to some foods?**

**A.** The most common behavioural effects of food chemicals are, in this order, irritability (touchy, easily annoyed, short fuse), restlessness, inattention and sleep disturbance (difficulty settling to sleep or frequent night waking). Quoting from the 1994 study by Rowe and Rowe (see references on website): "The younger children (aged 2 to 6) had constant crying, tantrums, irritability, restlessness and severe sleep disturbance, and were described as "disruptive", "high as a kite", and "out of control". Their parents were exhausted through lack of sleep and the demands of their children who were unable to be comforted or controlled." Children are not necessarily hyperactive, as you can see this story from a reader in Victoria: "I was referred to your book by a friend who had great success with her overactive son. I too have had success, however my 4-year-old boy has always been the opposite. He was always tired and grizzly. He would get upset easily if he couldn't do something and would rarely amuse himself. I also had to put him to bed at the right time or he wouldn't settle and would wake between 5 and 6 o'clock. He would also wake up very cranky and require his breakfast straight away but wouldn't eat much. It was very difficult to persuade him to do what we would like. It caused a lot of friction in the family and I would often hate him ... Now he is a changed boy. He sleeps in until nearly 7 o'clock, wakes up in a good mood and doesn't demand his meals straight away. He is very happy and co-operative and his appetite has increased immensely. He originally scored a 50 on the Fed Up scale and now only rates a 5."

**Q. I was reading through your list of common mistakes and was shocked by "confrontational parenting/teaching". This I'm afraid may well be me and at present, my son's teacher. I thought we were doing so well with the diet, he seemed to be much better at home however, his mid year report showed a worsening in behaviour and the comments were fairly destructive. What exactly is confrontational parenting/teaching ? I feel I am missing something and this may be it.**

**A.** When children are oppositional and defiant, a negative, angry cycle of arguments, screaming, prohibitions, criticism and punishments can become almost the only way in which parents or teacher and child relate. They bring out the worst in each other. The key rules of managing oppositional behaviour are to remain calm, to avoid conflict and confrontation, to avoid backing children into a corner and to emphasise rewards and positivity. Parents or teachers may need advice on how to break the cycle by finding areas of common interest (for example, a father may invite his son to go fishing with him and discover his son enjoys it.) This can provide a warm and enjoyable experience shared by both as a basis for change. This is much easier to do once diet has been implemented successfully, but you still have to take the steps to reverse the cycle. An authoritarian teacher who seems to be "picking on" your child can ruin the effects of the diet at school. Sometimes a change of teacher or school is required. You can read more about this topic in "Different Kids" especially p224 (point 2), and the following articles on the website under Order in the House: Self esteem (article about teachers), issue 14, front page; A calm approach to oppositional teenagers, issue 17, front page; and Oppositional Defiance, further down in issue 17. For children under 13 it is also worth watching the video "1,2,3-Magic" (you can borrow it from the LD Coalition, phone 02 9540 3300). For older primary and teenagers, the Lavoie video "When the Chips are Down" is excellent.

**Q. I tried phoning a dietitian but she told me she didn't really like to do elimination diets. I was wondering what to do next?**

**A.** Where do you live? We may be able to recommend a sympathetic dietitian for you. Or you can phone all the private dietitians in your phone book plus the hospital dietitians to see if there is anyone who will supervise the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital elimination diet. If not, we can give you the email address of a dietitian who will do email consultations.

**Q. I find it difficult when we are out somewhere and the kids start the "I'm hungry, Mum" whine! What can they have if we are at the movies or out shopping for instance?**

**A.** Some suggestions for movies: buy spring water or soda water and take your own food - Pascall's white marshmallows or Kettles chips. Some kids can manage violet crumble bars if they do not react to amines. Handbags or the pockets of cargo pants are good for smuggling food or you can write for permission to bring your own food. Suggestions for shopping: preferably, don't take the kids. Or feed everyone before you go. Or take a packed lunch, eg homemade chicken and salad sandwiches (lettuce, chives, FAILSAFE mayonnaise, beetroot as a treat, salt), hardboiled eggs, homemade cookies. Or you can buy spring water, Kettle chips, Pascall's white marshmallows, fresh rolls from Brumby's or Baker's Delight, celery juice from a juice bar (with half a carrot as a treat), So Good Soyaccino, cup of decaf coffee, Glengarry shortbreads, grilled fresh fish and a tiny serve of chips to share, steak sandwich with no extras - only bread and steak, order a plain BBQ chicken and take your own preservative free bread, have a picnic in the park. This all gets easier as you go, but there are some excellent tips about how to deal with whining in the video 1,2,3-Magic. Some toy libraries have it, otherwise you can borrow it from the LD Coalition, phone 02 9540 3300.

**Q. I have observed that small amounts of salicylates seem to disrupt my child's ability to regulate his blood sugar. Is this possible?**

**A.** As far as I can see this is not documented in the medical literature but I have observed the same effect in my daughter. She can even suffer from attacks which are like a diabetic hypo, particularly induced by exercise, overheating or shock (eg from an accident). The attacks can include weakness, lack of cooperation, belligerence, swearing, mental confusion and

paranoia. Normally she is not like that at all. They come on very quickly and can improve equally quickly if she eats a spoonful of sugar, which she normally resists while in that state. This is described in my book "Different Kids". She also reacts behaviourally to sugar while eating salicylates. If we avoid salicylates, additives and flavours, she has no problems with sugar.

There is a condition called ketonic hypoglycemia which was relatively common in children 20-30 years ago, when children were often given aspirin (salicylates). The condition became very rare when aspirin was no longer recommended for children. One of the children in our network was recently diagnosed with it. The treatment of glucose polymer caloric supplement throughout the day as well as FAILSAFE foods made a huge difference to him.

The only other medical journal article I've found about a possible salicylate-blood sugar connection was written by a marathon running doctor. His paper describes collapse during a marathon which he attributes to the interaction of aspirin for a knee injury plus exertion and overheating, the point being that he had run many marathons before and taken aspirin before but never both at the same time. He concluded that the interaction contributed to his collapse.

**Q. I am looking for bought lollies that I can use for my sons birthday. I have looked for all lollies mentioned in Fed Up (in several shops) but apart from Pascalls vanilla marshmallows I cannot find anything. Darryl lea white jelly beans have lemon oil in them so that may be why my son has reacted badly to them. I phoned up Snows confectionery to find out what is in the 'flavour' listed on their packets is. They said "it is a trade secret". Could be old boot polish for all I know or something worse. Many packets of lollies do list 'flavours' on the packet. Would these be FAILSAFE? My son's birthday is next week and I really need to know if there is anything left that is FAILSAFE. Could you please help me with this?**

**A.** I share your frustration. It would be so easy for manufacturers to make a wide range of additive and flavour free delicious caramels, toffees, butterscotch, barley sugar, caramel fudge, and milkbased lollies, but they don't. Darryl Lea butterscotch and honeycomb crunch are FAILSAFE. After that it gets more difficult. If the label says flavours (even natural flavours) then some children will react, especially if they eat more than one. Many children react to the white jelly beans permitted by RPA, so I no longer recommend them. If your son can manage amines, you can try Violet Crumble Bars. My daughter can manage only a few Werther's Original Butter Candies because of the flavours, same with Moo Choos. Allen's milkshake lollies seem fairly safe. We used to get Fantails or Chocolate Eclair lollies for lolly bags - a few for our kids and lots for the guests. If you look around local shops sometimes you can find caramel fudge made without flavours. White fairy floss (cotton candy) is FAILSAFE if you can find a person willing to do it. One of the schools here hires out a machine and an operator but you'd have to have a pretty big birthday party.

**Q. Can this diet not work?**

**A.** There are many mistakes which will cancel the benefits of the diet. The most common problem is too many mistakes. Next is too many salicylates, often in the form of pear juice, or snack packs of pears in natural juice, or pears which are too hard, too many pears or pear jam. Or too many treats, like white jelly beans, Kellogg's Rice Bubble Treats or too much 7UP. Some people are better off avoiding these. If you have to drink 7UP, less than one glass a week is best. For young children, mint-flavoured toothpaste or chewable vitamin tablets are enough to ruin their diet. Added "flavours" in processed foods like sweets or yoghurt can be too much. Antioxidants (310-321) in oils are a common problem. Any commercial food which contains vegetable oil is likely to contain these additives and they don't have to be listed on the label, eg biscuits, snack foods, fish and chips. Commercial chickens are usually cooked with MSG and other flavourings on the skin. This affects the meat. There are many complaints of reactions after Red Rooster meals or BBQ chickens. Some people need to avoid extra foods such as dairy foods, wheat, gluten or soy. Watch out for non-food factors like perfumes, or cleaning chemicals, new carpet or new car smells. Illness and prescribed medication can cause extra problems. Stress can also cause the diet to fail. A child or adult

who is angry or forgetful cannot be expected to become a cheerful high achiever in an authoritarian, punitive, hostile atmosphere at home, school or at work.

**Q. Do you think that everyone should try this diet?**

**A.** This is a hard question. You should only try the diet if you have a problem, but I have seen many people who didn't realise they had a problem until they did the diet because of another family member - and found that they felt much better. If there is no one in the family with migraine, itchy skin rashes, asthma or irritable bowel symptoms, it is probably worth just cutting out additives for three weeks, then reintroducing them. But it is almost impossible to avoid additives unless you really know what you are doing. One of the advantages of the elimination diet is that it is basically a three week course in how to avoid additives. A good compromise is to do the elimination diet but to include unlimited fresh fruit and vegetables. The result is additive-free but quite luxurious from the point of view of someone who is doing the diet strictly.

**Q. I have been wondering since reading your book if my son may have always been intolerant to foods, even my breastmilk. He had skin rashes/eczema in the first weeks of his life and was a very difficult baby (reflux, colic) until I stopped breastfeeding him. At the time it was felt that this was because I had enough milk for two babies and very heavy let down that this little baby was trying to guzzle! I wonder now if he was so unsettled because I was eating foods he reacted to.**

**A.** Food chemicals including additives and salicylates can go through breastmilk to affect a food sensitive baby with any reactions from the range of food intolerance symptoms including itchy skin rashes, irritable bowel (colic, reflux), irritability, restlessness, difficulty falling asleep and frequent night waking. I wish I'd known about this when my kids were babies (see "Different Kids", chapter 1).

**Q. Having just finished reading your book "Fed Up" this morning (great thing to do on Mothers Day), and then rushing around the kitchen to look at the ingredient labelling on many of the foods we eat, I felt that I must e-mail you promptly to ask if you know of any elimination diet friendly dietitians in and around Fremantle, Western Australia???**

**A.** It is very difficult to find elimination diet friendly dietitians in WA, particularly around Perth. I would love to hear from any interested dietitians! Failing that, we can recommend a dietitian who will do consultations by email.

**Q. I was wondering if you could offer any suggestions as to how to get my son to take the 'antidotes' you suggest. He's not able to take tablets yet and I 'wore' the bicarb I tried to get him to have!**

**A.** Bicarb tastes horrible. You can buy some Caltrate tablets (at any pharmacy), crush up a half and serve it in a spoonful of golden syrup or pear jam. The limit per day is 2000mg for adults, so halve that for children. One tablet contains 600 mg.

**Q. We have found that our daughter, who has a mild case of ADHD, may be having some reaction to different food colourings and flavourings. We have noticed that every time she stays with her grandmother, who feeds her Froot Loops, she is unbearable. We are looking at the elimination diet and hopefully she will improve. We explained to her why we are doing this and she seems to be quite co-operative with it. Now it is waiting and seeing time.**

**A.** Froot Loops no longer contain artificial colours, although they do contain natural yellow colour annatto 160b which is one of the Big 50 additives known to cause problems. Your daughter's behaviour might also be triggered by the other flavours and colours in Froot Loops which contain salicylates.

**Q. Our children aged 6 and 10 yrs become uncontrollable after eating some foods, we had previously put it down to being sugar. Can you see any other links between cordial (pale colours as we have always been wary of colouring), apple juice (no preservatives listed), muesli bars, chocolate and lollies? The reactions are almost immediate with the children going "hypo".**

**A.** The link in all these foods (including chocolate if it contains fruit or mint flavours which many do) is salicylates. Most people have a slow delayed reaction to salicylates but there are a few who react straight away. Or you might be misinterpreting the reaction by looking at the food last eaten when they are really reacting to something they ate yesterday, or "going over the top" because of the cumulative effect. The only way to find out is to do a proper elimination and challenge. It took me six years to understand salicylates:

- All plants produce toxic chemicals to protect themselves from insects.
- Some humans are sensitive to these.
- The most widespread toxic chemicals in plants are salicylates.
- Aspirin is a member of the salicylate family.
- The average daily Australian diet can contain almost as many salicylates as an aspirin tablet. This is enough to affect people with salicylate sensitivity.
- There are some people who can't tolerate any amount of salicylates.
- In salicylate-sensitive families, salicylates are more likely to cause problems than any other food chemical.
- Most aspirin and salicylate sensitive people (perhaps more than one million Australians) are not aware of their sensitivity.
- Salicylates occur in some fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, spices, herbs, processed foods containing these foods or fruit flavours, herbal medicines and vitamin tablets.
- People who react to salicylates will also react to some additives such as colours, flavours and preservatives.
- Salicylates can provoke a very wide range of problems including (but not only) itchy skin rashes, irritable bowel, asthma, arthritis, difficulty settling to sleep, irritability, restlessness, hyperactivity, headaches, tinnitus, impairment of memory and concentration, depression, panic attacks, epilepsy and anaphylaxis.

**Q. After four weeks on the elimination diet, I gave my kids one Usana children's chewable vitamin pill (Usanimals) each. All four kids reacted for a week, like "silly cats" - silly, jumping around, wouldn't listen, couldn't concentrate, fighting with each other. The little ones were the worst. I couldn't believe it, how could one tiny little pill be so bad?**

**A.** Usanimals, like all children's chewable vitamin supplements, contain flavours, usually strong natural fruit flavours such as cherry, raspberry or orange, which are very high in salicylates. This also applies to flavours in children's antibiotic and painkilling syrups. Food sensitive children nearly always react to these. As well, some vitamin preparations contain bioflavonoids or herbal supplements which are a potent source of salicylates.

The only recommended FAILSAFE vitamins are Macro M, Amcal one-a-day, and MVM (not the children's chewable) multivitamins, and plain white Vitamin C tablets. Adult capsules can be emptied and white tablets can be crushed and served in a spoonful of golden syrup or rice syrup (half dose for children). The same with antibiotics and painkillers.

**Q. There is a new herbal supplement in the USA which is supposed to really help kids with ADHD. Is it FAILSAFE?**

**A.** Herbal supplements all contain salicylates. Sometimes the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, usually not. If you want to use a supplement such as Efalex, then you can test it in a careful challenge after you have finished your elimination diet. Wait for three good days in a row, then take the maximum dose every day for 7 full days while sticking strictly to FAILSAFE foods. Keep a food/symptom diary. If there is a strong reaction, stop the challenge.

After 7 days, review your diary entries and decide whether the supplement is making you better, worse, or no change.

**Q. Does the failsafe diet work for people with Aspergers or autism?**

**A.** Yes, but as well as failsafe you should try glutenfree and dairyfree. Then do your challenges. There are a number of ASD children in our network. Some have come to us already doing an GFDF diet. They usually find it is worth looking at salicylates and amines as well, for instance, this mother: "your advice was wonderful. My daughter is on a gluten/dairy free diet for her autism. I had been cooking coconut bread (from a recipe given to me from the USA). You told me about coconut being a 'no-no' because of the salicylates. Well I decided to challenge. Wow, what a difference. Things keep on getting better. I still have a lot to learn!!!"

**Q. My son is now 8. He was diagnosed with ADHD when he was 5. He has been on Dexamphetamine, Ritalin, Catapres, Melleril and many others. He has not been on any medication for some time now. He developed tics at about the age of 6, which he still has. Will this diet also help Tourette Syndrome? All the doctors and specialists I have seen told me that the elimination diet does not work. Well, after what we all have been through, I am at the point where I feel the doctors aren't helping us at all.**

**A.** Tics are definitely food-related in some people. Families in this network report that tics reduce and may go away altogether while on failsafe foods but will return when children break the diet, or late at night when very tired.

**Q. Does diet help with sleep apnoea?**

**A.** As far as I know there is no connection recognised in the medical literature, but we have received reports of sleep apnoea disappearing completely while on failsafe foods, and returning during transgressions (so far reports of yum yums and some preservatives).

**Q. Is there a link with diet and ADD in adults?**

**A.** This question was asked recently on our email discussion group. A surprising number of members responded that yes, they were ADD adults controlled by diet.

**Q. My husband sometimes gets pains in his left arm, spreading up to his shoulder and in the region of his heart. Of course, the first thing we considered was heart attack but when he goes to hospital they can't find anything wrong.**

**A.** There is a report of an incident like this 30 years ago during a study of the effects of MSG (Schaumberger, 1969). One of the volunteers who was a GP took himself to hospital with a possible heart attack. He later realised his symptoms were triggered by MSG. We have received two similar reports of emergency trips to hospital hours after dinner in a Chinese restaurant, only to find nothing is wrong.

**Q. I am alarmed about a story on the internet about a teenager in the USA who died while taking Ritalin. My son took large doses of Ritalin for years until we started on the diet. Now he only takes one or two a day while studying.**

**A.** The 14-year-old died at home while playing on his skateboard. The medical examiner found the cause of death to be cardiac arrest secondary to blockage of coronary arteries that supplied blood to his heart. Such changes in the blood vessels are not ordinarily found in children so young. It's well known that amphetamine and cocaine affect the coronary blood vessels and the heart itself. The Michigan autopsy found pathological changes in the boy that match those of amphetamine and cocaine abusers. The boy had been taking Ritalin for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder prescription for 10 years, since the age of 4. The medical examiner believed that no other reason could account for the changes in the child's heart. At least two other children who were taking Ritalin have recently died, in Texas and

Ohio. These cases will now be investigated further. Ritalin has been used for more than 40 years for children with ADHD. But until the 1990s treatment for more than five years was unusual. Now many behavior experts are recommending lifetime stimulant treatment for ADHD and more children are taking Ritalin into adolescence. Doctors recommend that any ADHD teens complaining of heart symptoms should be assessed by their doctor and possibly referred to a cardiologist for a more complete exam and a stress electrocardiogram.

**Q. Is aspartame FAILSAFE?**

**A.** Aspartame and other artificial sweeteners are not permitted on the RPAH elimination diet.

Approved sweeteners are white sugar, brown sugar, icing sugar, caster sugar, golden syrup, glucose syrup, rice syrup and pure maple syrup. Although FINA has never received complaints of food intolerance reactions to aspartame, there have been overseas reports of itchy skin rashes, headaches and children's behaviour problems. We have, however, received a number of complaints about serious aspartame addiction. These consumers may drink up to 15 cans a day of aspartame-sweetened drinks, representing a can an hour while awake plus one or two in the middle of the night. Obesity can also be problem. People who consume large quantities of aspartame may gain weight rather than lose it. Aspartame's effect of increased appetite, which defeats the whole purpose of a low-joule sweetener, is reported in the Lancet (1986). The best reason of all for avoiding aspartame is a possible association with brain cancers, which have been increasing in children and adults in westernised countries during the period that aspartame has been available on the market. Olney's studies with rats (1996) showed that rats fed aspartame developed a higher rate of brain cancers than those not fed aspartame. A study by aspartame manufacturer G.D. Searle to test the toxicity of diketopiperazine, a metabolic by-product of aspartame which may be responsible for brain tumours, found that both experimental and control rats developed a 16 times higher rate of brain tumours than average. The Bessler Report on an FDA investigation of Searle laboratories noted evidence of failure to maintain and feed control and experimental animals separately. It is possible that both groups were eating aspartame-containing feed. The FDA did not act on this report or other scientific evidence urging caution before approving aspartame for public use. (See references in Fed Up, p 127-128, 339)

**Q. According to your shopping list, Kellogg's Rice Bubble Treats are permitted. But my son reacts to them.**

**A.** Some children are more sensitive than others. Any food listed as "limited" may affect some children. My daughter also reacts to Kellogg's Rice Bubble Treats. She says when she eats even one, it sets up a craving so she'd rather not have them in the house.

**Q. We did the diet strictly for 2 months with our 10-year-old son. There was absolutely no change. What did we do wrong?**

**A.** The most common reason for failure to improve is tiny frequent mistakes. If there is no improvement at all within 10 days, it is worth contacting your dietitian, or our email support group to check for mistakes. The other, less common, possibility is a small mistake only once a week (eg a seasoned chicken, one ordinary sausage, too much parsley) for a type 3 responder (slow to react, slow to recover - up to a month in some people), so improvement never happens. The most common mistakes are listed below:

- Pear juice or pears canned in juice instead of syrup. Those handy little containers of pears in natural juice, which fit into lunchboxes, will cancel the benefits of the diet.
- Too many pear products, fresh, tinned, pureed, jam and ketchup. There is a limit of two pears pears per day, less for some people, note that pears must be soft
- Too much parsley - use for colour not for flavour
- Too many Darryl Lea white jelly beans (limit of 4/day but many children are better with none)
- Too much 7UP (less than 150 ml/week) or Peter's Lemonade Icyoles (1 per week)

- Cold-pressed oil, even canola - the only safe cold-pressed oil is soy
- Coloured or mint-flavoured toothpaste
- Antioxidants, not listed on the label, in any biscuit which contains 'vegetable oil'. Ritz and Jatz often cause problems. Low-fat crackers such as water crackers, Saltine and Saos contain less oil, but the more you eat, the more likely you are to react
- Hot chips and potato crisps (eg Arnott's Lite) cooked in oil with antioxidants
- BBQ chicken with seasoning or stuffing - it is NOT OK to eat the meat and avoid the skin or stuffing
- Flavours, even natural vanilla, will affect some children, eg in vanilla soymilk, flavours in commercial custard and yoghurt but watch especially for flavours in caramels, toffees, lollies
- Natural or artificial fruit flavours in vitamins or children's syrup medications eg such as paracetamol and cold medications, flavours or colours in antibiotics. We have many reports of people with presumed antibiotic intolerance that is really a reaction to the coloured capsule. Ask if you can empty the capsule contents into golden syrup or a glass of water.
- You may need to exclude more foods, like dairy foods, wheat, gluten or soy
- Some people do better on free-range eggs, or no eggs.
- Some people are sensitive to citric acid or cashews (not common, but it happens)
- Exposure to chemical fumes like paints, household cleaners, workplace chemicals, aerosol deodorants, cosmetics, garden pesticides, weedkillers, new carpets, mattresses, shopping malls, service stations
- Sometimes there is a non-food cause like too much stress, confrontational teaching styles, or even a need for more praise from parents

**Q. How can I find a dietitian?**

**A.** There are free dietitians in hospitals and community care centres, and private dietitians are listed in the yellow pages. Ask for a dietitian who has experience in supervising the Simplified Elimination Diet from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Your best bet is a dietitian who has visited RPAH for an inservice. Good dietitians should give you a set of two booklets from RPAH plus an a set of corrections (1998) or a shopping list (1999). They should also be prepared to answer questions by phone, and refer to RPAH if they don't know the answers. If your dietitian is unable or unwilling to answer questions as they arise, you might like to join our email support group (send request to [confoodnet@ozemail.com.au](mailto:confoodnet@ozemail.com.au)).

**Q. We have always bought in bulk, exploiting a rather large freezer in the basement. It makes economic sense, and saves us time too. Who would have dreamed this policy might aggravate my children's conditions?**

**A.** Other families with large freezers have reported problems for amine responders. Meat should be frozen the day you buy it and used within a month.

**Q. I notice you mark, as salicylate, many items that feingold.org does not, such as pineapple. Perhaps you avoid even the smallest traces? Feingold does this too, in their special SAS diet, but I've never looked at that one.**

**A.** Pineapple is definitely not a small trace. It is the salicylate equivalent of dynamite, but yes, we do avoid even small traces. I believe the SAS diet is the same as ours regarding salicylates. Most people have no idea how sensitive their children are to salicylates until they avoid them all. Some children react even to pears. I have seen desperate families exclude dairy, gluten and soy when the only problem was salicylate sensitivity, plus additives of course.

**Q. Between salicylates and amines, are there any fruits left?**

**A.** Only pears, they have to be peeled, ripe soft and juicy (limit 2 per day), or canned but only in syrup not in natural juice because the juice usually contains peel which contains salicylates. This is not forever, but until you find out which foods are a problem. After challenges, small quantities are reintroduced systematically to build up tolerance.

**Q. We use to use lemons all the time, as a form of salad dressing, since we can't trust anything from a bottle. Do you have any other dressing ideas?**

**A.** Try Robin's dressing:

¼ cup maize cornflour

3 tsp citric acid

1 tsp salt

½ cup sugar

1¼ cups water

2 eggs

175 ml canola oil

Cook together cornflour, citric acid, salt, sugar and water. When thickened, pour into blender and while whizzing add eggs and drizzle in canola oil. Keeps well in refrigerator for approximately two weeks. (with thanks to Robin Fisher)

**Q. Like fruits, virtually all nuts seem to be bad. Are there any good ones?**

**A.** Raw cashews are limited to 10 per day

**Q. I know cheese is a problem but what about dairy foods like milk, butter and pure icecream?**

**A.** Some children react to dairy foods, some don't. If there is a history of frequent ear infections, grommets, or lactose intolerance, it may be necessary to avoid all dairy during your elimination diet and do a systematic challenge as soon as you have obtained five good days in a row. All healthy foods must be challenged according to the protocol so that you are not avoiding them unnecessarily. If dairy foods are not suspect, then plain milk, fresh white unpreserved cheeses (like ricotta and cream cheese) butter and pure ice cream (eg Sara Lee rich vanilla) are ok. Vanilla yoghurt can be ok, limited, but watch out for annatto colour (160b).

**Q. Most natural sugars are ok, but what about corn syrup?**

**A.** Corn syrup contains small amounts of salicylates, as does raw sugar & cane juice

**Q. Since sunflower seeds are high, how about sunflower oil for cooking?**

**A.** The only recommended oils are sunflower, safflower and canola, not cold pressed and free of antioxidants (gallates and TBHQ, BHA and BHT). Cold pressed soy oil is OK, the others have too many salicylates in them.

**Q. How long can cooked meat or fish sit in the fridge before it becomes a problem?**

**A.** The same day, but preferably leftovers should be frozen as soon as possible. Note that fish should be frozen within 12 hours of being caught and eaten within 2 weeks.

**Q. Do the comments about chicken (skin livers etc) apply to all poultry, such as duck and turkey?**

**A.** The stronger the flavour, the more amines, so approach duck with caution. Turkey is FAILSAFE but of course can't be selfbasting or all those other things they do to it.

**Q. These restrictions can make for some rather bland meals, if we can't use some spices. Which ones are ok?**

**A.** Garlic and salt, nothing else. Nothing is bland if you use garlic! You will find your taste buds adapt very quickly and food tastes stronger and better than ever. You'll wonder why you ever needed all those strong flavours. Most people find processed food is far too strong after they have eaten FAILSAFE food for a while; their taste buds had previously been seduced by the food industry.

**Q. How about rutabega? This is in the same family as broccoli and cauliflower, so I thought I'd ask.**

**A.** We think that this is what we call swede, which is OK. You can't go by food families. Broccoli and cauliflower are out, cabbage and brussel sprouts (same family) are FAILSAFE .

**Q. How about soy oil, or, partially hydrogenated soy oil. The latter is in many commercial products, even the purest products at the healthfood store.**

**A.** Soy oil is OK, see conditions above, but we always have to phone the manufacturer to find out whether it contains BHA or similar because it does not have to be listed on the label.

**Q. How long can eggs sit in the fridge before they form amines?**

**A.** Most people can manage eggs, except for those with a true egg allergy (less than 1% of adults, less than 3% of children under 5). Sensitive people can react if the eggs are obviously stale. Some people manage free-range eggs better. Also it depends what the chickens are eating. Some sensitive people react to the feed that is now used to make the yolks orange.

**Q. I know canned fish/meat is a problem. Is this because the proteins age or something to do with canning?**

**A.** It is to do with amine buildup, not the canning.

**Q. In other words, what about canned veggies and fruit?**

**A.** They are fine if the foods are FAILSAFE, eg beans, pears (only in syrup, not natural juice). With canned beans like 3 bean mix, watch out for spices.

**Q. I have always found the many tips in your newsletter useful, on the occasion I missed, I was still giving my daughter Vanilla Fruche in her lunchbox and didn't put two and two together, put the behaviour down to tiredness, when we stopped with the fruche, Voila! Any replacements that you know of for lunchboxes?**

**A.** Several readers have reported this problem. Vanilla Fruche used to be FAILSAFE. It now contains sorbate preservative (200). Unfortunately, staying additive-free requires constant vigilance. The food manufacturers don't have to give us any warning when they suddenly introduce potentially harmful additives into our foods. Have you tried vanilla yoghurt instead? Look for a brand without 160b annatto colour. Another alternative is Petit Miam which is FAILSAFE.

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