

FAILSAFE #51

Newsletter of the Food Intolerance Network

January – March 2007

The Food Intolerance Network supports people worldwide using a low-chemical elimination diet free of additives, low in salicylates, amines and flavour enhancers (FAILSAFE) for health, behaviour and learning problems.

To see this FAILSAFE Newsletter in colour on the web:

<http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/newsletters/FAILsaf51.html>

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Questions: detailed help and information.

Cooks Corner: Hints: Breadcrumbs, Near-Beer Bread, Gnocchi, Moroccan lemon lamb tagine, Homemade Donuts, Campers Dream icecream balls

Hello everyone

The highlight of this newsletter for me – as often happens – is the readers' stories. From a needless 30 year battle with asthma, to a young couple who went through hell to help their seemingly autistic son, to a determined mother almost defeated by a school counsellor, I'm sure you'll find it as inspiring as I have to read of the extraordinary results achieved by such individuals in the face of official denial. There's more about the effects of food on asthma: on the one hand we have the World Health Organisation warning about the number of asthmatic children affected by preservatives and on the other, doctors who know that childhood asthma rates increased dramatically over 20 years but say they don't know understand the cause – and in the middle we have the asthmatics who find for themselves their asthma goes when they change their diet. Also in this issue, news from a failsafe Vacation Care program, some important warnings about mislabelling by food companies who should know better, more failsafe products, kitchen appliances to help the failsafe cook's life easier, and delicious new recipes. Many thanks to everyone who sent us season's greetings and to those who nominated me, for the second year in a row, for Australian of the Year award, I feel very honoured and appreciate this recognition of my work.

Howard and I wish you a happy and failsafe 2007 - Sue Dengate (sdengate@ozemail.com.au)

Focus on asthma: let's halve the asthma rate in children

With students returning to school, the Food Intolerance Network launched a campaign to focus people on what their kids eat. Research reveals that when children in NSW go back to school, their asthma attacks increase by a factor of five. The food they take to school also contains large quantities of sulphite preservatives, which have long been linked to asthma.

"You can exceed the Acceptable Daily Intake of sulphites by eating just two dried apricots", warns Dr Howard Dengate of the Food Intolerance Network. "And don't forget that any dose of sulphites can be too much for many asthmatics." Dried fruit and muesli bars containing dried fruit are major sources of sulphites for children returning to school, as are luncheon meats, devon, sausages, cordials and drinks, including some fruit juices.

The conservative World Health Organisation says 20-30% of asthmatic children react to sulphites while Australian research has found that up to 65% of asthmatic children are affected. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended phasing out the use of sulphite preservatives where possible due to effects on child asthmatics. If that happened overnight the prevalence of childhood asthma would probably halve.

Despite this evidence, the drug company-sponsored National Asthma Council of Australia continues to say of asthma and food that "Food is not a common trigger for asthma" and "Foods, drinks and food chemicals affect less than 5% of people with asthma." Over 100 years ago the relationship between sulphites added to foods and asthma led to the first food regulations, but people have forgotten this while the food industry, government regulators and even asthma associations neglect their responsibilities for public health education.

"Look out for asthma sensitisers in your food and always read the label" suggests Dengate.

There are more links and resources at www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/asthmafailsafe.htm, including school foods that are recommended. Many thanks to Network members who responded with stories or said they'd be willing to appear on TV.

Failsafe Cookbook available from 1 March 2007

Sue Dengate's long-awaited, updated "Failsafe Cookbook" will be available in Australian and New Zealand bookstores from 1 March 2007. This is a fully revised and expanded edition in which Sue has compiled hundreds of new and improved recipes for all kinds of occasions, as well as up to the minute information about food intolerance and elimination diets. ISBN 9780646459257 Published by Random House Australia RRP \$32.95. Thanks to the many failsafers who contributed recipes and ideas, and to all for their patience.

FSANZ Food Additives Forum

Failsafe Leader Jenny Ravlic participated in a phone/web forum run by Food Standards Australia New Zealand in December 2006. She reported good information on sulphite usage, to which FIN contributed, and that the whole forum is on their website <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/webseminars.cfm>. "I only asked one question about the need for benzoate preservatives in products where some brands use the preservative but some brands don't eg Schweppes lemonade). Another question that I was going to ask was asked by Julie Eady (of Additive Alert) about the registering of food intolerances relating to additives. They acknowledged that the food intolerance issue was a huge problem for regulators and they were looking at possibly having RPAH keeping a register of reactions to additives - apparently it is not done anywhere else in the world. There was interesting discussion, prompted by a question from someone else, about what determines "short term exposure" to an additive - is it just a few days or weeks compared to 10% of someone's life during the teenage years, or the high risk category of preschoolers. The next forum is based on food intolerances, so I would love to be involved again. Hopefully we can get a few more FIN "leaders" on board. Overall, I think it was a great forum, and was very happy to be involved.

Please email confoodnet@ozemail.com.au if you are willing to participate in the next forum.

Food Intolerance Network antioxidant submission withdrawn

FIN made a submission to FSANZ in December 2004 asking that ALL antioxidants in fats and oils in foods be shown on the label, even where the oil content was less than 5% as it is, for instance, in many soymilks. In July 2006 FSANZ issued an Initial Assessment Report (A555), calling for public input. We understand that over 500 responses were made, a huge number, but when Howard Dengate met FSANZ in December 2006 it became obvious that the submission would be rejected because there were no peer reviewed placebo-controlled double-blind studies showing negative effects from synthetic antioxidants at these levels. Never mind that the synthetic antioxidants were initially approved by FSANZ without any such studies, let alone studies including children or behavioural effects. Never mind that FSANZ would probably not act even if such a study was done and provided to them. Never mind that **all we are asking is that manufacturers tell us what they know is in our food**. If we allow the submission to be rejected then we cannot raise the issue again even with more scientific evidence, so we have withdrawn it and await a response from FSANZ. We'll keep you posted.

Changes to food regulations in England

The good news:

- reduction of permitted nitrate/nitrite levels due to cancer worries
- withdrawal of two hydroxybenzoates, also called parabens, 216 and 217. (In Australia 217 is banned and the only permitted use for 216 is in food colours – which wouldn't be listed on the label of coloured foods due to the 5% labelling loophole.)

The bad news

- authorisation of seven new food additives including TBHQ (already permitted in Australia and causing problems for our members)
- wider use of benzoates, sorbates and sulphites in crustaceans (Crustaceans except prawns are safe for us to eat only when fresh and preservative free)

If you would like to make a comment about these proposed changes by 7th April 2007, see <http://www.food.gov.uk/consultations/consulteng/2007/additivesengland0701> - thanks to Caroline.

Research

* **Additive survey** People in Britain consume on average 20 different food additives every day, with some eating up to 50, a survey commissioned by Birds Eye food company has found. Yet many people are unaware of this figure, with nearly half of the 1,006 people surveyed thinking they ate only 10 additives each day. The research also found that many people do not understand which foods are most likely to contain additives.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/6233395.stm>

* **Migraines and Tourette syndrome** A family history of migraines is a classic indication of food intolerance. A survey of 100 patients diagnosed with Tourette syndrome found that 25 per cent fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for migraine headaches - nearly 4-fold more than the frequency of migraines reported in the general population - and 56 per cent reported a family history of migraines. Kwak C and others, Migraine headache in patients with Tourette syndrome Arch Neurol. 2003 Nov;60(11):1595-8.

* **Naming and shaming** As part of a campaign against childhood obesity, Australia's consumer watchdog Choice has released the name of 10 market leading snack foods and beverages that can pack in as many kilojoules as a Big Mac and a middy of beer in a single serve despite "all natural", "low GI" and "real fruit" labelling. Leading brands named in the report included Ribena blackcurrant drink, Arnott's Tiny Teddies with pink dipping goo, Nuttella, Uncle Tobys Roll-Ups, Steggle's Chicken Nuggets, Nestle Milo Cereal and Go Natural's berry pieces in yoghurt.

<http://www.choice.com.au/viewArticle.aspx?id=105576&catId=100289&tid=100008&p=1&title= Foods+that+make+kids+fatter+faster>

Diet not working as well as you'd hoped?

One tiny mistake can make a huge difference. For fine-tuning, see the Checklist of common mistakes. Readers tell us this list is **very** useful.

In brief

* **Kefir and allergies** There are many studies showing that kefir, a traditional fermented probiotic drink common in Eastern Europe, has positive effects on irritable bowel symptoms. Now kefir has been shown to reduce specific IgE antibodies in mice, leading researchers to suggest that it may help to reduce food allergies in babies, although more research is needed.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/10/061015213714.htm> and see Talking Point, below.

* **Laughter really is good for you** When twenty healthy volunteers watched the American comedy video There's Something about Mary, their arterial blood flow increased an average of 22% - the same as doing exercise - but when they watched the stressful start of Saving Private

Ryan, blood flow decreased by an average of 35%. Miller M and others, Impact of cinematic viewing on endothelial function, Heart, 2006 ;92(2):261-2; more details at <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000EA775-7465-13CD-B46583414B7F0000>

* **Former head of US Food and Drug Administration sentenced** Lester Crawford, former head of the FDA and Chair of its Obesity Working Group, was sentenced in January 2007 for conflicts of interest and making false statements because he and his wife owned shares in four major companies regulated by the FDA, including Pepsico. His Obesity Working Group report was widely criticised at the time for placing no responsibility on the food companies.

* **Nonchemical headlice treatment** Resistance to chemical treatments is rising. Scientists found that one 30-minute application of hot air delivered to the scalp via a LouseBuster device - which blows warm air like a handheld hairdryer while the area to be treated is slowly combed - has the potential to eradicate head lice infestations. Goates BM and others, An Effective Nonchemical Treatment for Head Lice: A Lot of Hot Air, Pediatrics. 2006; 118(5):1962-70.

* **Fish and whole grains linked to asthma protection** Yet another research report that says that "the rise in prevalence of asthma in western societies may be related to changed dietary habits" but fails to ask what is it that they are **not** eating if they eat a lot of fish and wholegrains. <http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/printNewsBis.asp?id=72710>

* **Birds Eye challenges consumer perceptions of food additives** A Birds Eye study says that "UK consumers go to greater lengths to avoid additives in their diet than salt, sugar and genetically modified ingredients." We can only hope that other food manufacturers pay attention! <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/printNewsBis.asp?id=73212>

Now targeting...

*This section is for the growing number of people who ask "Can I do anything to help?" These people phone food company hotlines and write letters to politicians and food companies. Judging by the bread preservative reversal, this strategy works. We have agreed to team up with Western Australian-based www.additivealert.com.au to target a different additive in each newsletter. **Now targeting: McDonalds***

"I have 3 children on failsafe (or trying), I recently looked up www.makeupyourownmind.com but could not find anything on preservatives or the like so I rang them and asked about alternatives for the antioxidants in chips and so forth. She was very helpful and told me if enough people made enough requests they do try and change ingredients - for example the hash browns are now gluten-free due to public demand. I would like people to know about this - wouldn't that make life just a bit easier on trips to town or outings when you really need to get takeaway for the kids' sake and your own? <http://www.mcdonalds.com.au/contactUs/> – thanks to Leisa

Readers' stories

The first story in the section wins the **Courage Award** for the best story in this Newsletter, with the prize being a copy of the DVD "Fed Up with Children's Behaviour". If you have some helpful comments on this issue, please email suedengate@ozemail.com.au:

[524] Open neglect by medical establishment (January 2007) COURAGE AWARD STORY FOR JANUARY 2007 NEWSLETTER

Criminal. It's the only word that comes to mind when I realise that, from the age of 10, I have suffered terribly from asthma; and yet, over the next 23 years, not a single - I repeat NOT A SINGLE - so-called "doctor" ever once asked if my condition might be due to environmental factors", or that it might be caused by the food that I eat... All they ever did was pop a stethoscope on my back, and fill out a prescription for ventolin... "See ya next time, Mark!"

I am so angry and frustrated at the modern medical establishment for their open neglect. For years, almost every morning I would wake with an awful wheeze and a fit of coughing... And it only got worse as my 20's progressed!

When I think back to those days (although I never made the precise connection myself at the time), it got to the point where I would need my puffer after almost every meal! Macca's.. Pizza... Pies... even good 'ole home cooked meals like curries, stews & roasts! As you can imagine, I became very depressed.

I will also confess that I was indeed a smoker as well (I know, I know), but I gave them up around 3 years ago thinking that IT was the main *cause* of my asthma... Oddly enough, I was wrong ... the daily ritual wheezing-fest continued unabated. I was, by then, needing up to 20 puffs a day and my depression worsened. I remember thinking: "I've given up the damn ciggies, so why aren't I any better?! What's wrong with me?" I began to accept that I would NEVER recover from this ailment.

Then I discovered your website, "Fedup!" ... And oh what a life changer!

I bought the video a few months back and have read much of the material on the website, and with what I now know about salicylates, amines, preservatives and additives of all kinds, it finally all makes sense!

So far, my family and I have managed to stop the intake of preservatives and additives (That's the EASY part!) with noticeable improvements too, I might add, especially for my asthma! However, I have not completely recovered yet, and my eldest son - although improved - still has temper problems; so, over the last two days we have finally started tackling the salicylate/amine issue... It's harder I'll admit, BUT, I can already see definite positive-changes from my first-born son, and in my own well-being as well.

It's been around 6 months now since we actively started amending our diet, and overall, my asthma is now highly manageable... (I now use the ventolin only rarely, and the morning-wheeze is completely gone!) But, it's not just that: I finally feel "in control" for the first time ever; I feel that there is now real hope that it could perhaps, go altogether! I really do.

Thank God for you, Sue. Thank you for caring enough about human beings in general, to do what you do. Alright, I'm falling to tears now... so I best go - *Mark & family, Vic*

[546] One-liners (January 2007)

If no one's told you recently, thanks so much for all the work you do - you have changed our lives! It's good to have a asthma free, medication free, tummy ache and diarrhoea free child after many wasted futile hours and \$\$\$\$ spent in specialist surgeries!! And even now I've found the answers

(thanks to you), still the doctors are not interested in hearing about it. That's what I find so hard to believe! - *Fran, NSW*.

We've just had Christmas Day down at my nanna's who is very very supportive, her traditional christmas "feast" of things processed, bought ready made to save her work went out the window in 06. We went totally failsafe for everyone and you know no-one missed out, we had what the kids could have and everyone had a top time not like Christmas 05 with it ending it tears etc. - *NSW*

I am a mother of five children who has recognised the benefit of a failsafe diet. My kids were never really 'bad' just a bit naughty sometimes, and having trialled full failsafe we are now on a preservative, additive, flavours etc free diet and all doing well. - *Qld*

My five year old son was a 'bread brat' as you describe in your books - as soon as he stopped eating preserved bread and started drinking magic cordial he changed.- *Tas*

I work in health and am constantly amazed that there is not more connection made to food related reactions as I can recognise them a mile off - asthma, eczema and so on. - *NSW*

Thank you so much for everything, without your work my family would still be wheezy, itchy, rashy, cranky and doped up on medication for all these ailments! - *by email*

[545] Failsafe Vacation Care program (January 2007)

At present I'm doing Vacation Care for children aged 6-12. I have done this program for the last two holidays and this year I have changed the program so that we provide morning and afternoon tea. From my results so far - a week and a half - it has been fantastic, and the difference in the children is amazing. The parents have been very understanding and have not complained about the extra \$1.00 charge per child per day. We cook things from your Fed Up book and the children love the food. When they bring things they shouldn't, they put it back in their bags. We can have up to five children with ADHD or behavioural concerns but now you wouldn't know they were in the program. - *Nicole, NSW*

[544] "parlate dell'introduzione in Italia del farmaco Ritalin per i bambini con ADHD" (January 2007)

Ho sentito che oggi parlate dell'introduzione in Italia del farmaco Ritalin per i bambini con ADHD.

Prima o invece di dare Ritalin ai bambini, e' opportuno fare un "elimination diet" per individuare eventuali intolleranze a salicilati, ammine, glutammati (che sono "natural food chemicals"). Inoltre, sarebbe un controsenso dare Ritalin a un bambino che continua a bere bibite colorate! Anche l'annatto, un colorante giallo naturale, ha un forte effetto sul comportamento di molte persone.

In Italia siamo piu' tutelati rispetto all'Australia per quanto riguarda gli additivi alimentari, ma poco tutelati riguardo alle sostanze inutili aggiunti nei farmaci. - *by email, Italy*

[543] Covered in eczema at age of three (January 2007)

By the time she was three, my daughter was covered in eczema and watching videos all day as she couldn't keep up with other children. We now have a healthy five-year- old after one year on the diet. Her energy improved within three weeks of starting the diet. Reading your book was a comfort as I thought I knew lots about allergy and eczema. She had been on the healthiest foods:

wheat free, sugar free, chiropractors, Chinese medicine, acupuncture, biocom, skin specialists ... I was exhausted and pretty fed up when I started learning about failsafe foods. One year on we have a clear picture of what we can have and it is expanding every month. Sulphites, benzoates and salicylates are our main problems, but we stay off any preservatives and colours. Thank you for helping us. Reading your book helped me feel not so alone and laugh at some of the crazy mistakes I made. – *by email, South Australia*

[542] Palpitations and MSG (January 2007)

Having suffered panic attacks and palpitations on-and-off for years I started seriously looking at the foods and additives I was stuffing into my system. I can now tell you that the prime trouble maker for me is flavour enhancers. As others have done before me I visited doctors and hospitals after bad attacks only to be sent home with a "nothing wrong with you" report. Then one day, I had taken a double dose (flavoured corn chips and kebabs) which well-and-truly landed me in hospital. The interesting point to this story is the specific effect the MSG had. While I was on the heart monitor (for about 12 hours) the doctors and I could see what my heart was doing and we were able to determine the safety of the situation.

The sinus node (the electrical trigger) was firing and was firing regularly. This was a good thing! The troublesome aspect was the MSG was somehow interfering with the distribution of the signal around the heart. This meant that although the heart was beating/pumping, it was doing so at a reduced flow rate. That is, the contractions weren't as strong as they should have been. Although it was pumping enough blood to keep me lucid/conscious, a beat could not be felt by me in my chest, nor could a pulse be felt at my wrist. NOTE: it felt as if my heart had stopped but in fact was just beating weakly. I tried to convince the doctors this was MSG-induced, but they just closed their ears, their eyes glazed over, and told me they couldn't understand why my heart was behaving the way it was.

Now I know what my heart is doing, I no longer have panic attacks triggered by a few 'missed beats'. The difference is knowing that the ectopic beats aren't going to kill me, and even though I can't feel the beats, I reason that if I'm still alive and not suffering chest pain etc. then I'm just having another 'episode'.- *by email*

[541] Unable to focus eyes properly after additive-laden treats (January 2007)

I have excluded artificial colours and preservatives where possible and this seems to work with my children however I noticed some reactions over these holidays as I have let them have some treats. Corn chips caused a really silly reaction in my 5 year old son, he was even not able to focus his eyes properly, and the same reaction from a BBQ meatlovers pizza. – *by email*

[540] Heading towards a diagnosis of autism before - the difference in him is so dramatic the paediatrician was in shock (January 2007)

When I originally wrote to you, my three-year-old son had a severe speech delay, many behavioural problems, refused toilet training, was having upwards of 6 dirty nappies a day and the paediatrician was heading towards a diagnosis of autism.

The first two weeks on the elimination diet were "HELL". My son's behaviour was so bad I was in tears when the day was over and he was in bed asleep. My husband and I were determined to give this a go and we stayed strong together to get him through the rough patch. Four weeks after starting, his behaviour improved each day, the tantrums decreased dramatically, he became calmer, his attention span increased, he was happy to try sitting on the toilet for me, the autistic traits stopped, he would sit and do activities with me and the most impressive of all in one week

he said - "Dad", "Mum" and his own name "Sam". He has never called me mum & it brought tears to my eyes - he has since then said love you mum and tries hard to string words together.

The difference in him is so dramatic the paediatrician was in shock, he is a non-believer of diet having an effect on children, however, after seeing the difference in Sam he was blown away. He said he was pretty sure after the last visit he would end up making a diagnosis of autism for him, now after seeing him six months later he is thinking it is just speech delay and is not so worried about the minor autistic traits. We are focused on sticking to the diet especially with the progress Sam is now making. He does on occasions slip on behaviour - but he is only three. We feel we have our beautiful little man back. – *by email, Qld*

[539] Possible autistic spectrum if not failsafe (January 2007)

My husband and I have two lovely children. We have been through the whole thing of oppositional, erratic and violent behaviour and for us the worst part was insomnia and extreme restlessness at night. No-one ever got a rest. This all was cured with the invaluable assistance of your books, and a profound response to the elimination diet especially for our youngest child who is a 7 year old girl, Lily. She is extremely sensitive to everything – salicylates, amines, chemicals - you name it. Our son is affected, but not as badly.

At times I have wondered if Lily perhaps has Aspergers, or is somewhere on the autistic spectrum, but we had her assessed at age 4 (after being failsafe for three months) and were told that she is bright, possibly gifted, and that she can be extremely anxious because she is clever enough to be able to think about things and therefore worries about things. We prepared her very carefully for school and so far have had no problems - until this month.

Twice this month Lily has lashed out at school, due in part to chemicals. She started swimming lessons every day and the other thing was a class party with heaps of bad food which no-one helped her to avoid. Today she has been "red-booked" and placed on detention for the second time, for hurting someone. The school counsellor who was called in told me "there are NO studies that prove that food intolerances are in any way related to behavioural disturbances". She went on to tell me that it was all in my head, and that it is coincidence that withdrawing a food substance or chemical would have a positive effect on our daughter. She then proceeded to tell me that Lily probably has Aspergers and that the paediatrician probably didn't want to tell me that. I am feeling so enraged. She hasn't even met Lily.

We follow the failsafe lifestyle to the letter, and are eternally grateful to you and your family for sharing your stories, and for your tireless work. Our family wouldn't have survived without Fed Up and how some one can say the things that this counsellor said belies belief. Our son who is now 13 is easily able to make good food choices and knows only too well what bad choices do to him. He was shocked at the response of the school counsellor. My husband - who was a total sceptic 4 years ago - was absolutely livid with that school counsellor. He knows how bad it was here, and how much work I have put in to making our little family happy and calm. I guess we will just keep soldiering on and spreading the word, but this person nearly got the better of me. – *by email, NSW*

[538] My three sons (January 2007)

I have 3 sons, aged 11, 10 and 6. I started the elimination diet about six months ago and have seen a great improvement in my two younger sons. The middle son is by far the worst effected by all the things that you say to avoid. At times he will have things he shouldn't and for the afternoon he is off the planet. When he settles down I ask him how he felt and he'll say he knew what he was doing but could not control it. Now he even tells his grandmother "No, I can't have that". Even a friend of his grandmother's noted how quiet he was. Last month my mother-in-law gave the

three boys an icecream as a treat. She is from the old school and didn't really believe what I had said. Within minutes the two youngest were off their tree, so this was a real wake up call.

[537] Is there anyone else with salicylate intolerance misdiagnosed as Irritable Bowel Syndrome? (January 2007)

I have completed the elimination diet and found that I have an intolerance to salicylates. My father is a gastroenterologist and when first had symptoms of this intolerance (stress, constipation, headaches, sinusitis etc) he thought it was Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). He referred me to his colleague, who also stated the diagnosis was IBS. Both of these gastroenterologists never considered that the problem may be related to diet, and they didn't even know what salicylates were! I might add that both of them are very professional doctors and have both been head of the gastroenterology department at hospital - so you would think they would know something about it. It took my dad a long time to recognise that salicylates exist - I had to show him websites and papers that linked it to behavioural problems for him to really believe me. He just thought I was on some crazy diet and that there was no real basis to it!

My concern is this – that there are many people out there, particularly young women, who may have this food intolerance and be provided with the easy diagnosis of IBS. As you would be aware, an IBS diagnosis really doesn't help anyone because there isn't much you can do for it. And unless you keep searching for a solution (which I did, and my GP eventually came up with it) then you may never know you have an intolerance because salicylates are in everything!

Do you know of many other people who have been provided with an incorrect diagnosis for this food intolerance? I only know of one other person, and if there are more, then I think this should be brought to the attention of the national body for gastroenterologists. – *by email* [if you are in this category, please write to suedengate@ozemail.com.au with your story]

[536] PMS, period pain and diet 1 (January 2007)

Replies to the question in newsletter #50 – “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?”

I too have had lots of success in regards to the diet with my whole family but the main improvement for me was dealing with PMS. I am a 28 year old woman and have had two children. As a teen I had very irregular periods and would sometimes not have a period for 3 or 4 months, quite often becoming physically sick when the period did come, not to mention the cramps and mood swings, and I always had PMS symptoms when I was due, whether the period came or not. Having children actually seemed to help my symptoms, but without realising, I was eating differently through my pregnancy and then afterwards because I was breast feeding.

Two years ago all my symptoms started again and six months ago I figured out why. I had gone back to work and was relying on prepackaged food a lot more where I always used make my own, and as a result my whole family suffered. My then six year old had all sorts of trouble emotionally and my then two year old turned into a monster. My husband was diagnosed with irritable bowel and I had all my former problems including depression. Now thanks to a friend who recommended failsafe I am pleased to say we are now back on track and I can safely say that it is all down to food. We tried, through trial and error, all different sorts of treatments to help all our ailments, but simply changing our diet has helped us all. - *by email*

[535] PMS, period pain and diet 2 (January 2007)

I read in the newsletter that you were interested in reports about improvement in PMT and infertility and the diet. Prior to failsafe I was having irregular cycles, really really bad irritability for almost two weeks prior to my period and bleeding which sometimes lasted for three weeks for each cycle. I had sore breasts from about day 17 of each cycle, sometimes they were so bad I couldn't hug my little boy without being in pain. Since being on the diet I no longer have sore breasts prior to my period. I only have very mild irritability about a day or two prior to my period and I am having 27 day cycles every month with bleeding only lasting about 5 or 6 days and no clotting. Also, my period pain has lessened a great deal too.

I have been trying for 2 and a half years to conceive and I'm now hoping I will be able to get pregnant if I stay on the diet. It took 13 months to become pregnant with my first child. My PMS seemed to become worse after I had my son. – *by email*

[534] Soy and depression 1 (January 2007)

Stories [534-532] are replies to the question newsletter #50: "my daughter has tried 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?"

Whenever my son drinks soy or eats soy products he spends most of his time cryingoften about nothing that he can pin point. He becomes resistive to discipline and is reluctant to do his work at school. He becomes tired and will often fall sleep in the afternoon. I'm obviously not 100% certain that this is what it is but it sure does seem coincidental... - *email, Qld*

[533] Soy and depression 2 (January 2007)

Just responding to question in newsletter #50 about depressive reactions to soy - my daughter reacts the same to cows' milk as to soy, even small amounts of soy in anything. Exactly as the question in the newsletter said, "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". – *reader, Vic*

[532] Soy and depression 3 - unexplained "fevers" and hallucinations (January 2007)

As a baby and toddler, my son had constant unexplained "fevers" as part of his never ending list of reactions. It wasn't till he was 6 years old and he had had a few unexplained fevers with hallucinations that we found these came from soya beans. He has always been "picky" with soy products, usually refusing them himself – but mum didn't always trust him fully - now I know they do him no good!

His hallucinations were shocking to witness – they happened only in the evening or night, usually just after falling asleep or when disturbed in sleep, e.g.picked up for toileting. He often didn't have a high temperature according to the thermometer but woke in an unconscious way with eyes open and talking and listening. He saw terrifying things around him and removal to another room with comfort helped a little but only usually for seconds. The only solution that worked properly for us was cool wet towels for reducing fevers round his neck and forehead whilst cuddling him. He usually dropped off to sleep again with these. On a bad night this continued again after a couple of hours.

As usual doctors here were at a loss to explain these and claim them to be most probably fevers related to viruses. They suggested continued treatment as we do perhaps with paracetamol too

keep it at bay. It was only after that I connected intake of soya beans 36 hours previously on the last occasions and I tested it with a very small intake which showed a minor reaction - still hallucinations but for a much milder and shorter period. Consequently soya beans are off our menu and I respect my son's taste buds when he refuses foods – he is usually allergic or intolerant of them. Allergy specialists here avoid giving soy milk to milk allergics as much as possible due to the close connection of the two allergies and the fact they believe soy allergies develop quicker in such cases. – *reader, Sweden*

[531] ODD reaction to spring flowers and Floriade (January 2007)

A reply to the question in newsletter #50: 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?

The question about ODD and spring flowers in the last newsletter rang a bell with me. My daughter Louse also gets really cranky and her ODD symptoms worsen during the period when all the wattle begins to flower, and then in early spring when the flowers start to bloom in abundance. Unfortunately, this also happens to be the exact time when she has to be most in control of her temper and emotions due to her Irish dancing commitments - the state and national championships.

This year was particularly bad - there seem to be so many more wattle trees around here now, and they started blooming at the start of July. Louise was extremely bad-tempered - her quality of schoolwork declined, her spelling declined (even though she is now a voracious reader) to the point of going backwards, maths dropped back to grade 3 level (age-wise, she is year 8) and there have been many arguments and temper tantrums with all family members. It got to the point where I was beginning to doubt my sanity! and also, whether she was sneaking non-failsafe food from other sources - but I know my friends wouldn't give her anything unsafe, and her friends just don't like her behaviour when she deviates from the diet, so that wasn't a factor.

I was thinking that the culprit might be pollens. It was totally validated when we went to Canberra in the last week of September for the Australian Championships. One word – FLORIADE - Canberra's flower festival. Yee-hah. All that pollen in one convenient location! Louise's dancing was shocking during practices, she argued with her friends over the dancing (SHE wasn't making mistakes, EVERYONE else was), arguing with her teacher (who she loves), crying, picking fights, "I wish I'd die, then everybody would be happy, because nobody wants me around" - I'm sure you can imagine the rest!!!

It's getting better now, I've cracked down on a few infractions, and she is asking her friends not to spray their deodorant near her (and at dancing, spraying deodorant, hair-spray or perfume inside the hall is now banned) and she's taking a claratyne daily to help with the pollens. She's definitely a reactor when it comes to pollens and spring! – *reader, Vic*

[530] Salicylates are our nemesis (January 2007)

We have been on the elimination diet for 6 weeks using a dietitian from your list and she has been great. Salicylates, well that's our nemesis - I get cranky, stressed and short tempered, my 8-year-old daughter gets teary at the drop of a hat - crying, stressed and the "what ifs".... . My three year old is extremely sensitive to amines - defiant, disruptive and hyperactive. Antioxidants don't affect her behaviour but her cheeks flare so something isn't right. More than 5 plain Sakatas or LCM bars send her off the planet.

It's hard as you would know trying to ensure they have food without the nasties. I am educating Day Care and they are trying to buy failsafe foods as they are sure other children are affected as

well, not just my daughter. Next my challenge is going out to Little Athletics where they only sell "crap" icy poles when it is a stinking hot day. – *failsafer, NSW*

[529] 635: Hives from 635 and swimming (January 2007)

For the last month, my daughter has been suffering from hives on average about every two days. It is driving me crazy not to mention how she is feeling. It started when we went to a friend's place for swimming lessons, something that we had done every week for three months. She broke out in hives all over her body, arms, legs, chest, vagina, and bum, everywhere; luckily, it did not affect her breathing. I took her to the doctor straight away and he thought it must be from the chlorine in the pool, my friend then told me that it was a salt-water pool, so then we thought it must have been something that she ate. Four days later Emma got hives again on her arms and thighs, this time after eating salted peanuts. Two days later again at 4:30 in the morning, my husband and I were beside ourselves as to what was causing this. Each time it happened, we gave her Phenergan, which made it disappear. We then went away for ten days, with a supply of Phenergan and Emma got them about six times while away. On coming home, I wrote down every time Emma had gotten hives, and suddenly it dawned on me that it was about half an hour after eating or swimming. I think I have narrowed it down to additive 635, as that was the common ingredient in all of the foods Emma had been eating. What I want to know is why this is now present when she was always having these foods, has she built up an intolerance to these foods? [See a similar report of hives from 635 and swimming in story #467. My understanding is that saltwater pools do contain chlorine, although in smaller amounts than usual - S]

[528] "When we started the diet to help our daughter, we didn't realise it would help our son's asthma too ..." (January 2007)

After years of friends and teachers telling me that my child needed medication (she was a "Jekyll & Hyde" according to one teacher) and doctors who just assumed her problems were hormonal, a girl guide leader noticed my 9-year-old daughter's behaviour problems (fighting, defiance, stealing etc) after eating certain foods and suggested failsafe eating. Within weeks, apart from a few withdrawals, everyone noticed an improvement and now, nine months later – what a difference! When we decided to do the diet to help our daughter, we didn't realise it would help our 6-year-old son's asthma too but he hasn't had an attack or been hospitalised since we started.

Unfortunately my doctor is not very supportive, but I have found a great paediatrician. As she said in the last appointment, the food companies market all of these so called good foods to our children, but she ends up dealing with the backlash e.g. behaviour problems etc.

My son and daughter are now at the stage where they don't ask for "bad" food any more because they know what it does - at a friend's workplace recently he bought them a huge packet of lollies, to which they politely stated "No thank you". When he persisted as to why a couple of 9 and 6 year-olds didn't want lollies, they said "Because I choose to be healthy" which is what they have learnt to say when teased at school about having to be on this diet.

I know now that what I thought was healthy, e.g bread, devon, tomato sauce etc, wasn't healthy for them. During the challenges, my daughter reacted to amines, colours and preservatives. My son reacted violently to the colours with his asthma mostly but hasn't had an attack since we started failsafe. My son couldn't care less what the kids at school say anymore. When they open their packet coloured foods, he says "my mum makes better anyway". When we had a fete at school in September, we had a failsafe sweet stand and the kids loved it. My daughter's 9th birthday went wonderfully - no hyped up kids, a few kids didn't want to come because of the "diet" food, but they missed out. The parents commented on how well they all behaved, even the magician I'd hired couldn't believe how well they played, participated and listened.

My Mum and Dad, Before and After School Care, Church and Girl Guides have been totally supportive of my children's diets. If they have a party/special day etc they always phone me and either ask me to make food (which I'm more than happy to do) or they will ask for certain recipes and all the kids cook. My mother-in-law's "let's not tell mummy and daddy" attitude towards little surprises changed very quickly when she saw how my 9 year old reacted after a "Happy Meal". Ironically, not such a happy time was had!

We have a wonderful restaurant round the corner from home which we used to go to once per month as a treat for the kids – after the diet I phoned them, feeling a little silly, but as long as I tell them what they can make, skinless chicken, sauces etc, they are happy to do it and we haven't had a reaction yet.

At school, even though she has come such a long way in 9 months, my daughter is still being stereotyped by certain teachers, and sadly even the principal thinks she's not being given a fair go. So, we are starting off at a new school in January 2007 and are all looking forward to this change.

So many people told me not to be stupid, not to do all of this work etc, just put her on medication - I work full-time, plus do the normal mum and wife things in the home, but no matter what happens, we won't go back to "normal" eating ever again. I know it mightn't work for everyone, but it has worked for us.

I would like to say to all parents and caregivers, THE EXTRA HARD WORK IS WORTH IT!!! If you slip up, these things happen, just keep going! It has made our lives soooo much happier. To the Schools: help us parents out - stop having so much processed crap to sell the kids, they get used to having homecooked food without the nasties in it and your days will go much smoother. – *'Maitland mother', NSW* [Maitland mother would like to get in touch with other failsafers in the Maitland area, please email via suedengate@ozemail.com.au]

[527] Maya's story (January 2007)

One mother reported that her two year old daughter Maya was a "huge dried fruit eater", consuming two or three packets of dried apricots or similar and two or three fruit bars per week. At three packets of dried fruit per week that's roughly 250 mg per day, or 20 times the Acceptable Daily Intake for an average two year old (0.7mg per kg bodyweight or half a dried apricot for a 2 year old) set by the World Health Organisation. Sulphites are associated with both asthma and cough.

Maya had been diagnosed with suspected bronchiolitis at nine months. "Ever since then, she has had bouts of coughing on a regular and frequent basis, often only two or three weeks apart, usually with a cold but occasionally following a slight fever," wrote Maya's mother. "The coughing can last all night at its worst - but usually is about 40 minute bouts every few hours. There is no apparent wheeze, although sometimes doctors have found a slight wheeze with a stethoscope. Very occasionally, it will resolve gradually after a week or two but usually becomes worse and requires antibiotics". When Maya's cough was diagnosed first as asthma, then as hypersensitive cough receptors, "the paediatrician advised that there was no link to diet and that she would probably grow out of it". Although her mother had never noticed any connection, since avoiding sulphites Maya has been free of cough. – *reported by phone*

[526] Diet has been a lifesaver (January 2007)

We have had excellent results with diet for our five-year-old daughter who had severe asthma attacks with daily singulair, ventholin, atrovent and also 3 lots of prednisilone within the space of

about 3 or 4 months at the beginning of 2006. Since going failsafe in August, not even a cough. I attribute a big part of this success to eliminating both sulphites and artificial colours in particular.

I always felt that there was something more we could do, but just didn't know where to start. My children had what I thought to be such a healthy diet, no cordials, lollies and lots of fruit and dried fruit for snacks. Now I know better.

If telling our story assists in being a catalyst for positive change for other families in situations like ours, that will be wonderful - *Monica, NSW*

[525] “a second lease on life” (January 2007)

Without sounding corny, it is like my daughter has been given a second lease on life.

Our youngest daughter was diagnosed with asthma at 3 years of age and we then spent many times in and out hospital, with still no improvement. She missed so many days of Preschool, could not run without puffing and requiring her asthma puffer all the time, she also had permanent grey colour under her eyes. We really did not think we would be able to send her to school.....it was that bad.

Then a friend of mine from work went to a Sue Dengate talk ... and the light went on. I contacted my husband immediately and told him about it, cause we had been so worried and that night I cleaned out all my food cupboard and fridge and made it additive-free.

Our daughter is now 6 and is going into Year 1 and has not been in hospital since the month we stopped the additives. We have a liitle girl who runs, jumps for ages on the trampoline, has lost the grey under her eyes and very happy parents.

Abbey knows that she can't have food with additives and has had to make a lot of sacrifices, but when she said to me a few months after stopping all of that, that she feels better then I know it is all worth it - *Kathy, NSW*

MORE READERS' STORIES on the website

Product updates

****** WARNING****** possible unlisted annatto 160b colouring in **Nestle peach vanilla yoghurt**. From a failsafer whose son is sensitive to 160b but not salicylates: “ Got a phone call from NESTLE on Friday saying sorry about not having 160b on the packaging [of the Nestle peach vanilla yoghurt] and they reckon they are aware and fixing it immediately!!” – *thanks to Marg*

****** WARNING****** possible unlisted synthetic antioxidants TBHQ 319 and BHA 320 in NZ Family Choice canola oil – Do not buy this product until further notice - *thanks to Brendan*

****** WARNING****** McCormick's "Natural Sea Salt" contains 99% sea salt and 1% Natural cardamon flavouring, so not failsafe due to salicylates - *thanks to Jessica*

****** WARNING****** Products can have different ingredients depending on the wrapper, e.g. Pampas frozen puff pastry in sheets is preservative-free but rolls contain preservatives, Schweppes lemonade in bottles is preservative-free but cans contain preservatives.

****** WARNING****** Philly cheese - Kraft have recently added preservative 200 to their spreadable philly cream cheese in tubs (blocks are still preservative-free). If failsafers want to object they can fill out an online feedback form at www.kraft.com.au/philadelphia/contact.cfm - *thanks to Jacqui*

FAILSAFE SAUSAGES

Honestbeef frozen failsafe sausages are made by a farmers co-op from freshly slaughtered good quality beef – no offal (delivered to you by a nearby farmer's wife, they phone to make sure you will be home). With two hungry university students in the house we ate 10kg of these sausages in a month starting at Christmas and have never tasted such excellent sausages. East coast of Australia only. www.honestbeef.com.au

The butcher at The Pavilion, Mitchell Drive, Greenhills NSW 2323, makes the most wonderful Failsafe sausages - he's fantastic, his grandchildren follow an additive free diet – *thanks to Kylie*

Lenard's stores have been asked not to make preservative-free sausages for customers on food safety grounds but they have been encouraged to suggest that the customer use plain minced breast meat that can be made into patties or skinless sausages. – *thanks to Sue A*. Note that preservative-free sausages must be eaten fresh or frozen immediately.

Quants Butcher at Lindfield makes sausages on Tuesday and will do failsafe ones first so they aren't contaminated (beef and leek, and chicken and garlic) – *thanks to Tracy*

Frozen chips Woolworths Homebrand straight-cut chips and Woolworth Select French Fries are failsafe (potatoes, sunflower oil, citric acid as antioxidant, processing aids are sodium pyrophosphate (E450i) and antifoam). Unlike the McCains range, there are no unlisted synthetic antioxidants.

Dried Fruit Totally Pure Fruits freeze-dried pears from health food stores or phone Bio-Dynamic Marketing 03 5966 7370

Dairy foods Cheese slices (for those who can tolerate amines and dairy: Coles Farmland slices and Woolworths tasty cheese slices are additive-free but most of the other brands contain annatto 160b – *thanks to Marg*

Persimmon wine The 2006 vintage is now available by mail order from fruitwine@netxp.com.au. This appears to be low in salicylates and contains no preservatives, great as a treat for failsafers.

Household cleaning category McLintocks Vanilla Fresh Fridge wipe & deodoriser: ingredients: ethyl alcohol, water, ethyl vanillin, vanillin - *thanks to Jessica*

Check out the Updates page on the website for latest information.

Your questions:

Q. Over the last two months I have consumed 4 bottles of a special juice from the Himalayas. Since taking this product my eyes have become very dry and sore and I had to

go to an optometrist who advised I apply a solution to my eyes to get relief. My sister did a little research and discovered that one of the preservatives in this juice is benzoic acid (210), and that side effects of benzoic acid can include eye irritation as well as asthma, hives and hyperactivity. This was a shock to me as I have been taking the juice because I believed it to be beneficial for my health, containing natural ingredients. I would like to know what your thoughts are on benzoic acid and its effects.

A. I agree with your sister. Benzoic acid and other benzoates (310-319) can be associated with a very wide range of adverse effects. Reactions are related to dose and delayed, so the effects will be worse when you are consuming a benzoate-preserved product every day. The effects can build up so slowly you would not be able to notice the connection between a new food and how it is affecting you. You could test this for yourself by avoiding your special juice until your eye symptoms disappear. Then reintroduce the special juice in the same doses that you have been consuming while keeping a diary of your eye symptoms. If you want to test the benzoates without the juice - there is always a possibility that something in the juice itself is affecting you - you could use Schweppes lemonade in cans (contain preservative 211) not bottles (preservative free).

Reply (two weeks later): As you suggested I went off the special juice. It has been 2 weeks now and my eyes have improved 100%. Who would have thought that something like that could do this? Thank you for your reply because if it was not for you and my sister I would probably still be taking it.

Q. I'm confused. On page 16, Friendly Food says shallots are low in salicylates, but the recipes and shopping list refer to "spring onions (scallions)"?

A. These members of the onion family lack a fully-developed bulb and are milder tasting than other onions. I call them shallots but they have various regional names (scallions, spring onions, eschallots, green onions). See what to buy on our DVD, Friendly Food p7 or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scallion>

Q. We're on day seven of our elimination diet for my six-year-old daughter, and every day since we've been on this new diet she's gotten a little worse - more insolent, less able to keep still than normal, much MORE day-dreamy and going off on tangent-ish, slightly 'violent' - absolutely driving me crazy! How long does it take to see positive effects?

A. These turned out to be withdrawal symptoms, and the answer was, it took 8 days to see positive effects.

Q. The website is so handy and I refer to it frequently, but I often get lost looking for a piece of information I know I have read somewhere. A search tool would be very useful!

A. You can search our website using google. Search for: fedupwithfoodadditives <whatever you are looking for>

Q Can you direct me to any research that shows how diet can affect an adolescent with ADHD & ODD?

A. Superintendent Peter Bennett from the West Yorkshire police did a diet trial with 12 chronic juvenile offenders (aged 8-16) who had an average arrest rate of more than once a month. All improved. Those who remained on the diet did not re-offend. These were children whose ODD had progressed to Conduct Disorder, see citation below. You can see this study on our DVD. It is very difficult to do diet with adolescents unless 1) they themselves want to try it and 2) they get support from the community (e.g. school etc). The participants in the Shipley Project had to stay at home in the care of their parents for the first three weeks of their elimination diet. Further

reading: Bennett CPW and others, The Shipley Project: treating food allergy to prevent criminal behaviour in community settings, J Nutr Envir Med 1998;8:77-83.

Q. Can the elimination diet help these children: • a four year old girl who can be quite defiant when asked to do something she does not want to do, blames others for her behaviour (mainly her six-year-old brother), is very loud and chatty, and sings all the time when she is not chatting • a three year old boy son is very defiant, answers back "no", won't listen to instructions, almost shouts when he speaks and wakes early (5.30am) in the foulest mood?

A. The symptoms described generally improve if you can get the diet right.

Q. I have a son in his thirties who has been on the diet since the age of 6 (salicylates, preservatives, colours and dyes are the problem, not amines). Unfortunately, he has recently begun getting quite serious depression and is seeing a psychiatrist who just keeps prescribing different anti-depressants as none seem to work. I recently wrote a letter to the psychiatrist explaining my son's dietary problems and the symptoms he gets. The psychiatrist told him that all food intolerance is psychosomatic. You can imagine how much help that was. Are there any psychiatrists or counsellors who understand this chemical sensitivity problem? While he does try to stick to his diet, I do suspect there may be too frequent diversions from it or something is catching him out he is not aware of. Trying the elimination diet again is something I think I shall try to persuade him to do.

A. Symptoms of food intolerance can change throughout the lifespan, and it is not uncommon to find the foods that caused hyperactivity in childhood can cause depression in adulthood. There is case history describing a young adult with a history of childhood ADD whose severe treatment-resistant depression improved dramatically on a low salicylate elimination diet (Parker G and Watkins T, Treatment-resistant depression: when antidepressant drug intolerance may indicate food intolerance, Aust N Z J Psychiatry, 2002). The article concludes that clinicians should be aware of food intolerance-related depression and that it may be worsened by psychotropic medication. You can request our list of supportive health professionals - including some psychologists – from confoodnet@ozemail.com.au. It may be worth consulting a dietitian, as safe foods for this diet change constantly and your son could be following an out-of-date diet. To send the article's abstract to your son's psychiatrist, see http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Select+from+History&db=pubmed&query_key=1

Q. I know it is a mistake to buy anything without checking the ingredients, but the name on the packet of "Traditional Home Style Preservative Free" Egg Noodles sort of lulled me into a false sense of security. These egg noodles contain two artificial colours Sunset Yellow (110) and the dreaded Tartrazine (102)! ... I wouldn't have even noticed if the water I cooked them in hadn't turned a sickly yellow colour! The back of the packet talks about how the family began making traditional noodles back in the 'thirties from a time-honoured family recipe and also says that that the family has a commitment to quality and hand-made authenticity ... isn't this a bit misleading? I intend to email them to register my disappointment.

A. It is always worth emailing a food company with feedback about their product. Let us know about their reply and if you need any backup. Or nominate it for our Nasty Food Awards – send us the packet or a good photo of the packet and ingredients list.

Q. Because everything on the elimination diet is so 'green' I decided it would be a great idea to get red cabbage to liven my fried rice up a bit! ... problem is (being a novice) I had no idea that the red cabbage would colour the eggs in the fried rice an amazingly rich

blue!!! ... lovely but it didn't look so appetizing! Then the next day I was thinking of using the cabbage to colour icing for some 'gingerless pigs'. How do I extract the colour without my icing tasting like cabbage??? ... Also, although I noticed the eggs went bright blue, water left in the bowl with some leftover cabbage in it went a kind of a beetroot 'red'... Just curious as to why, how and whether I can make two different colours out of my cabbage?

A. Cabbage juice will be different colours depending on whether it is acid or alkaline - you can make it acid by adding citric acid (red; that will also take care of the cabbage taste), and alkaline by adding soda bicarb (blue).

Q. I believe my six-year-old son may be affected by food additives as he is erratic, runs, yells loud and then fights with his two older brothers, although he can behave when he wants to. After observing my son, our paediatrician decided that he did not have ADHD nor did the food he eats affect him, instead he said it was my parenting skills. I do not believe this as I have two older boys who do not behave badly. The paediatrician refused to write me a referral letter. I need help.

A. There are a number of ways around this. If you need to prove to the paediatrician that behaviour management isn't the answer you could do a parenting course such as 123 Magic (many community organisations are now offering this) or see the 123 Magic DVD (there's a link from our website). You would probably find it very helpful to join one of our email support groups (see EMAIL SUPPORT GROUPS on the website) You could ask your group or local contact if there is a supportive dietitian who can help you or write to confoodnet@ozemail.com.au for our list of supportive dietitians. Or you could cut down on problem additives and foods such as tomato sauce, citrus and broccoli, see the free downloadable Failsafe Booklet (under FAILSAFE EATING on the website).

Q. Are there any laxatives that can be used during our elimination diet?

A. Your dietitian may recommend one of the following laxatives – though obviously not the coloured or flavoured options:

- psyllium hulls or husks - a type of dietary fibre that is used as a bulk forming laxative, the husks swell when they come in contact with liquids so should be taken with plenty of liquids - available from your health food store or as plain Metamucil from pharmacies
- Ispaghula husks act in the same way as psyllium, available from your pharmacy as Fybogel
- guar gum - a vegetable gum sold in health food stores as a gluten free baking aid that you can add to muffins, bread etc, or as Benefibre in pharmacies
- lactulose - a synthetic sugar available as Actilax from pharmacies
- Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate - do not confuse safe sulphates with nasty sulphites, only for occasional use as a laxative). A bath of Epsom salts is sometimes used to calm autistic children, see www.epsomsaltcouncil.org for health benefits including a claim to ease migraines. Consult your pharmacist about dosage.
- vanilla parachoc.

Around the groups: getting in touch

Talking point

“What your thoughts on the use of probiotics are in helping food intolerances?” - thanks to Tanya

Probiotics are not recommended during your supervised elimination diet and if you want to try them, they should be introduced as a challenge. See kefir report below. We would like to hear from failsafers about their experiences with probiotics including kefir. See also research above.

Kefir report 1

I have had chronic fatigue, IBS and coeliac-like symptoms for close on 30 years. Every now and then it gets dramatically worse. At the same time as it worsened in October, I read an article which stated that kefir, a traditional fermented milk drink, may block immune responses which cause allergic reactions. Kefir also had a broader protective effect, preventing food molecules that can trigger allergies from passing through the intestinal wall. As I had seen kefir kits at my local health food store, I went out and bought one and started making and eating kefir on a daily basis. Because I was about to undergo a colonoscopy and endoscopy, I have been eating everything I am massively allergic/intolerant to so I can be diagnosed if I have either coeliac disease or lymphocytic colitis (which my aunt has.) But hey, here I am eating dairy, white bread (although no additives) and pizza and I can't get anything more than an extremely mild reaction. Normally I am doubled up with cramps and gastroenteritis after eating even tiny amounts of wheat, or have full cream milk in my tea (cream affects me more than milk.) I can't believe how much better I am even though I am not sticking to my diet at all - I am not eating preservatives or artificial additives however. It makes you wonder if artificial additives damage our guts so that we then become allergic/intolerant. Kefir is available from health food stores or from the producer at Eumundi on the Sunshine Coast. I do not know whether this effect will last, but I can't get over the improvement in my health. – *email, Qld*

Kefir report 2

I too have been trialling kefir since reading about kefir research last October. I bought my kefir as live grains (www.users.chariot.net.au/~dna/kefirpage.html) Like the failsafer above, I have found it really helps with IB and coeliac type symptoms. If I eat some wheat or gluten by mistake, the reactions are milder than previously – but the effect does not last unless I eat kefir every day. Be warned, live kefir grains are time-consuming. – *Sue Dengate*

Symptom discussions sheets

These have been introduced to summarise group discussion on various topics. The first one on hyperacusis (extreme sensitivity to sounds) has been very popular. **The new topic for discussion is reflux** – how does it affect you and how effective is diet? Please email confoodnet@ozemail.com.au – you will be asked before any story is used.

Absence

Howard and Sue Dengate will be away for the months of February and March, researching and trekking in the Himalayas – routine emails (subscribing to the Failsafe Newsletter, joining groups, requesting brochures and requesting the dietitian's list) will be answered by Chris but others will be delayed. The DVD can still be purchased and bookstore orders (but not individual orders) for the coming Failsafe Cookbook will be processed.

Salicylate analyses

Thanks to the many members who emailed with suggestions on their priorities for more salicylate analyses. These cost over \$170 each, so only a limited number can be performed. The priority list at present is Nori seaweed, Palm oil, Persimmon wine, Sunola oil, Yellow tomatoes (eg Ivory) - the full list can be seen at <http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/salicylatetest.htm>. Further comment is sought to confoodnet@ozemail.com.au before we commit.

Support

There are now 70 Support contacts in 47 locations in Australia, and in New Zealand and 10 overseas countries - see website.

The failsafe**asthma** group is one of our special groups. Since effects of food and the environment can be different for asthmatics than other failsafers, we strongly recommend this group for asthmatics.

We recommend **failsafebasic** for beginners. It is the smallest of the big general groups, You can join by sending an email to failsafebasic-subscribe@yahogroups.com with subscribe in the subject line.

Talks

Sue Dengate is planning a short lecture tour to NSW and Victoria. At present talks are in
Newcastle (Mon 30 April, CONFIRMED),
Wodonga (Wed 2 May CONFIRMED),
Frankston (Wed 4 May CONFIRMED),
Warnambool (Mon 7, 7-9pm CONFIRMED),
Ballarat (Tue 8, 11.30-1pm & evening CONFIRMED),
Cooma (Wed 9 CONFIRMED) and
Canberra (Thu 10).

Note that Sue and Howard will be away until 28 March so detailed planning will occur after that date.

Tweed Heads QLD Saturday 19 May 2007: Sue Dengate "Fed Up with Children's Behaviour" organised by Tweed Family Daycare. Details to be advised.

Brochures

Printable trifold brochures on food intolerance and oppositional defiance are available. We'll post two free that you can copy, or you can buy bulk copies at cost \$A0.22 each plus postage. See instructions on the website for accessing pdf versions. Email confoodnet@ozemail.com.au with enquiries. We loved this comment from one satisfied failsafer: *"Ah, the answer to my prayers. I had no idea the brochure even existed, but thanks so much for directing me to it. I am not very Internet savvy, however I found it easy enough. Regarding possible opposition to failsafeing within the child care setting ... now all I have to do is hand over a copy of this and let them ask questions! Thanks again. I highly recommend everyone print this out if you don't already have a copy, it sure cuts out the "but WHY can't your kid have (insert food here)?" questions. Great for grandparents too."*

Cook's corner

Hints

Breadcrumbs: I take frozen failsafe bread rolls out of the freezer and grate them for fresh bread crumbs. My local Brumbys store also made up a couple of bags of fresh breadcrumbs for me for \$1.00 each. – *thanks to Helen M*

Near-Beer Bread

An adaptation of an easy beer bread recipe by a failsafe university student

3 cups self-raising flour
3 tablespoons white sugar
1 (12-ounce) can of beer (or 375mls soda water)
1 tbsp Cornwall's malt extract (optional)

Preheat oven to 190°C. Lightly grease or spray a bread loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Combine all ingredients, mixing well. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 1 hour. The malt extract will give it a similar flavour to beer, otherwise it will be soda bread. – *thanks to Tom*

Gnocchi

500g potatoes peeled (older potatoes are the best)
1 cup plain flour, plus a little extra to flour your board/bench
1 egg yolk (optional)
salt to taste.

Dice potatoes into sugar cube size and steam until tender, about 15 – 20 minutes. Steaming, rather than boiling the potatoes will stop them drawing up too much water. Mash potatoes thoroughly and salt to taste. Add the plain flour and mix well. You could add chopped chives and the egg yolk to the mix at this point if you wanted to. Divide the dough into four. Roll each portion on a lightly floured surface to form a sausage 2 cm thick, then cut into 2.5 cm pieces. Roll each piece into an oval. Put a piece on the tines of a fork and press down with your finger, rolling the gnocchi as you do so. This will form a ridged shell shape. Place on flour-dusted trays and cover. Drop small amounts of about 20 gnocchi into boiling salted water. When the gnocchi rises to the top this means they are ready and should be removed with a slotted spoon immediately. If you do not remove straight away they will become soggy. When all the gnocchi is cooked, drain thoroughly and top with your favourite failsafe pasta sauce. I use finely diced leek, chives and garlic sautéed in butter and oil. – *thanks to Dianne H*

Moroccan lemon lamb tagine

The butter gives this dish a smooth flavour.

4 lamb shanks
50g butter
2 tablespoons failsafe oil
salt to taste
1 large leek, peeled and chopped
1 shallot, peeled and chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
20 saffron threads, infused in a little hot water (optional)
2½ cups water
300g potatoes, peeled and cut into pieces
1 large swede, peeled and cut into pieces (or carrot, salicylates, optional)
½ tsp citric acid

Heat butter and oil gently in a large pot over medium heat. Lightly brown the shanks all over, season with salt and remove from heat. Add leek and shallot to the pot and sweat until soft and golden, then add the saffron. Cook for a couple of minutes, stirring, then return the shanks to the pot and add the water, potatoes, swede and citric acid. Cover and gently simmer for 1 and a half hours or until the lamb is tender. Serve with cous cous, rice and cooked green beans or peas (glutamates). Serves 4.

Homemade Donuts

With the Ronson home donut maker, failsafe children can have a treat like everyone else - fresh donuts to share when their friends come to visit. The basic donut mix is failsafe, and fresh, hot

donuts can be dusted with caster sugar instead of cinnamon. Shop around as prices vary, and don't forget E-Bay - *thanks to Anne Hurman and other members of finB*

Campers Dream icecream balls

Great fun for the whole family and you can make whatever type of failsafe flavor you like. Fill one side with ice and salt and the tube with milk, sugar and vanilla or whatever. Pop the lids on to seal it up and roll it round on the floor until it's ice cream. Takes about 30 min. Here's the link and they deliver to Australia (we have two):

http://www.rei.com/online/store/ProductDisplay?storeId=8000&catalogId=40000008000&productId=47793013&parent_category_rn=5777366&vcat=REI_SEARCH

- *thanks to Michelle Jurgens*

The FAILSAFE Newsletter: You can have this Newsletter emailed to you for free about every three months, and also see it in colour with graphics on www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info

Subscribe: failsafe_newsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com **Frontpage:**

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/failsafe_newsletter

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sdengate@ozemail.com.au Thanks to Anne Hurman, Robin Fisher, Brenda Hunting, Jenny Ravlic, Kathleen Daalmeyer, Bronwyn Pollnitz, Julie Eady and the many others who have written, phoned and contributed to this newsletter. **Further reading: The Simplified Elimination Diet from dietitians, Fed Up, Fed Up with Asthma, Fed Up with ADHD and the Failsafe Cookbook by Sue Dengate Random House, and Friendly Food, by Swain and others, Murdoch Books.**

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