

Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

www.fedup.com.au

("salicylate", "salicylates", "sals" keywords only)

[1329] Nasal polyps (March 2015)

Yes I have. Definitely caused by foods for me. Low salicylate diet has helped a lot. Can breath thru my nose now - Jann from facebook group

The ENT specialist said that people who have asthma and nasal polyps are usually salicylate sensitive. We cut salicylates out of my diet and one week later I was able to breath through my nose. - from Geoff, see full story [\[995\]](#)

I have Samter's Syndrome (consisting of asthma, aspirin sensitivity and nasal polyps) also known as Samter's Triad or aspirin-induced asthma. For the last 29 years I have been taking medications and trying to stay alive. When I found the Australian salicylate lists I was so excited, I could finally understand what was happening. I was inadvertently eating salicylates every day. – from a US reader, story [\[994\]](#)

Sue's comment: There are numerous less-than-accurate salicylate lists on the internet. The only figures we support are the updated lists from RPAH - ask for our salicylate mistakes information sheet: suedengate@ozemail.com.au (reports received 2014)

References: Baenkler H, Salicylate intolerance, 2008 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2696737/>

[1327] Salicylates and the changing face (March 2015)



I could not resist sharing these photos of my little girl about 2.5yo pre-diet. On the left is the face we saw most days, all day. On the right is her now, the new girl. She has just started school and her teachers have said how great her behaviour is in class. So, for those just starting this journey of discovery, keep up the good work, be patient and good results will come.

The Pre-diet girl showed signs and symptoms very similar to severe ODD, ADHD, with anger, over emotional, anxiety, inability to concentrate on a task, several tantrums a day with each lasting anywhere up to 45 mins, self harm , irritability, aggression, frustration, laughing when inappropriate, waking screaming and going to bed screaming, very frequent wees (incontinence), aching limbs at night, blocked nose/sinus, itchy skin (no rash) sleep disturbance, lacking energy, sensitivity to touch, sounds, smells (Sensory Processing Disorder). We changed her diet just prior to her 3rd birthday and within two weeks we saw a completely different child. Even her little face changed. She became a calm, normal, loving, happy, intelligent, creative child. Her behaviour changed to what we would call normal 3 yr old. The odd tantrum, but not lasting long. The other issues she was also dealing with, just about disappeared or were greatly reduced ie sensitivity to sound/touch, aching limbs at night, incontinence, making toilet training possible. If they returned, we knew that we had gone over the salicylates threshold. We stick to a diet with her of low/mod sals. Knowing her diet, we can sneak in the odd strawberry or other higher sals foods here and there. No preservatives, additives, msg, artificial colours for her where at all possible. She is my third child, first child from second marriage. My other two children have no issues like this. Oldest has lactose intolerance. Youngest from second marriage has lactose intolerance too. Having ulcerative colitis now at 44, I realise that I had my own food sensitivities as a child and continue as an adult. I admit though, that we have not done strict challenges - Jan on facebook

[1326] One-liners (March 2015)

I was on anti depression medication for 7 years - once on fs & eliminating sals I found my fog lifted & I'm no longer dependant on tablets. While my overall diet was a healthful one by anyones standard the sals were in fact detrimental to me. Food is in fact my medicine - as long as I stay in the low list a hard learning curve at age 50 when my husband and children can enjoy everything - Jennifer

[1323] Salicylates and sleepwalking (March 2015)

I have a 5yr old daughter who is intolerant to natural foods. She becomes violent when she eats carrot and it can last for a few weeks on and off. She also cannot tolerate most fruits and unlike the violence from the carrot she acts drunk when she has fruit. We now limit her vegies, only give her bakers delight breads as we found she reacted to the vinegar from the supermarket breads and we have her on failsafe butter too.

Since changing her foods we have a happy child who is now more relaxed, we can now speak to her without her going off. She is calmer and much nicer child.

We have noticed that when we feed her something with salicylates she also sleepwalks very badly. Another thing, before we changed her diet she had ear infection after ear infection. I had her to an ear specialist who thought she needed an op but now looking back since changing her diet she only has an infection as often as a normal child - Mel (report received August 2011)

See [factsheet on sleep](#) and [story collection on sleep issues](#)

[1320] My young son has learnt his "happy" and "cranky" foods, but perfumes are the worst (March 2015)

My 3yr old son Jack is salicylate and benzoate intolerant. I began this journey after googling head banging and your website appeared with a wealth of information on annatto160b. I eliminated everything we were consuming Kraft cheese, yoghurt, ice-cream etc and noticed a drastic improvement. My toddler no longer banged his head on the floor or the walls.

After doing a supervised elimination diet, we spent the greater part of last year learning about failsafe eating and adapting our lifestyle accordingly. We went through the stage of convincing pre-school and family members that salicylate intolerance really does exist and after providing them with fact sheets from your web site they are more understanding.

Jack has learnt his "happy" and "cranky" foods and even asks if certain foods have salicylate or colours in them. A great learning tool was the weekly grocery shopping. The fruit and veg department became our classroom as we would talk about salicylate and foods that make us feel happy or cranky. The curiosity of a then 2yr old is amazing.

Benzoate was our hidden problem though. It was not until severe reactions to phenergan and valium that we joined the dots. Jack required a CT brain scan so sedatives were prescribed. After giving Jack valium, 6hrs later and we were still driving around with a 2yr old singing Playschool songs in short hand and stating I feel funny. Finally he fell asleep - yes that lasted for all of 15mins, we got the scan done and he was still bouncing off the walls at 11pm that night!

I have since learnt that poor Jack has been reacting his whole life. Baby panadol, bonjela, infacol - yes all salicylate and or benzoate as ingredients! In reality we have been making things worse for Jack by giving him over the counter medications that people use everyday in an attempt to ease pain.

Since managing most of the food issues we are now noticing reactions to chlorine, air freshners (at Nan's) and perfume (visiting aunts). A weekend visit to relatives has become a minefield of scents and hidden benzoates.

Like others I have read about we too notice a difference in behaviour after weekly swimming lessons in a chlorinated pool. After many attempts we have finally got Jack to wear goggles, but he seems to compulsively lick or drink the pool water (I am assuming he is getting some kind of fix from it). The level of aggression following lessons is what led us to draw the link.

It is a constant battle with one so young who cannot fully verbalise what he is feeling, he just reacts with kicking, hitting, head butting, talking gibberish and constantly rubbing his nose and playing with his tongue. Jack's reactions last 8 days and at the end of the reaction he gets very upset and clingy.

Dealing with food intolerance can be very isolating. When you hear comments that your child is a "horrid vicious child", as I have had said to me, it is upsetting. Or being told it would be good if you came to the birthday party late so we can have all the GOOD FOOD (junk full of colours and preservatives) before you arrive.

Perseverance does pay though and family and friends are noticing the difference. My parents can now distinguish between toddler behaviour and a chemical reaction. I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU for all the time and effort you put in to providing us novices with such a wonderful resource. There seems to be an endless amount of information we need to process in order to protect our children and your web site and cook books have been of tremendous assistance. Your efforts keep us sane!

UPDATE 3 years later: to re read our story (above) made me cry. I had forgotten just how far we have travelled on this journey to a new way of living. We still have our good and bad times, but food is under control, it's just inhaled salicylate/benzoates that cause us the most grief.

Jack is now 6yrs old and in year 1 at school. I spent a considerable amount of time educating the principal and his teacher last year on food intolerance and fortunately they were open to being educated! The Principal even made note of a new student having chemical intolerance in the school newsletter, and requested parents be aware that wearing fragrance in the classroom would have an adverse effect on one of the students.

As we all know this doesn't guarantee people will abide by the request, but after years of slogging away, to have the Principal accept the literature we provided him & be willing to assist, was a relief. He did liken food /chemical intolerance to when nut allergy firstly came about. He remembers a lot of scepticism re nut allergy & was willing to accept that food intolerance was a real issue for Jack; the greater community just wasn't aware of it.

The school toilets with the automatic air fresheners are our biggest problem at school. Again though the Principal arranged for Jack to use a toilet in the administration block that did not have an air freshener. This worked for most of kindergarten, but kids being kids the teasing about being different has kicked in, so now Jack is unwilling to go to the administration block for bathroom breaks (which is understandable).

Most of the kids in his class are fine about Jack having his own treats for special occasion days at school, but there are always 1 or 2 kids who like to remind him his food is different (yes, tastier/healthier and home made!). I take cup cakes to school at the start of each term for class birthdays and leave them in the freezer. The lady who runs the school canteen has been lovely, and lets me take homemade pizza or chicken nuggets in and she heats them up, so Jack can have a lunch order just like the other kids.

On reflection we have been blessed with the staff we have encountered at school. I have gotten quiet good at smuggling my homemade chicken nuggets and French fries into McDonalds birthday parties. I did approach them about re-heating nuggets for me, but food safety standards wont allow them to. Now I heat them just before I leave and travel with a heated medipack in an insulated lunch bag. Then there is another one with an ice brick in it for the homemade ice cream cake!

As I said food is the easy part. Shopping centres, toilets, theatres and hotels are still places we try and not frequent too often. Even going to the Doctors is an issue, with other patients in the waiting room wearing fragrance, the hand sanitisers and air fresheners.

We love our Rainbow Air and are no longer scared about staying in hotels. Though I still do spend a lot of time researching establishments that we can access without going through lobbies/foyers and elevators. Caravan parks with cabins or your old fashioned single story motels are safest.

Again Sue, I want to thank you for your tireless efforts in guiding us and reminding us we are not alone. To be honest the bad days can be really bad when trying to calm a child high on chemical overload. It is exhausting. To know others in this forum understand and are experiencing similar is comforting. Those in my circle of friends try and understand, but until you see an outburst first hand, you can't fully understand. - Nicole by email

See more: <http://fedup.com.au/information/frequently-asked-questions/perfume-and-chemical-sensitivity-questions#rainbow>

<http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/support-factsheets/fumes-and-perfumes>

[1319] Printzmetal's Angina due to unlisted artificial colour in 'safe' medication (March 2015)

Just had another clash with so-called 'safe' medications. I asked the pharmacist to send me a cough suppressant, and discussed with her (again) my chemical/food reactivity. She sent me Duro-Tuss Forte, which, trusting soul that I am, I began to use. That night the coughing got worse and worse, to the point of being on the brink of vomiting. Next day, coughing was a little less racking and throat-scouring. Then, last night Printzmetal's Angina woke me - really bad pain, and the trigger for me is salicylates! ... Now, I thought the chemist had checked the ingredients. It turns out that she did not know anything about 'sunset yellow' □ colouring (artificial colour 110) ..." - Jennifer by email

Sue's comment: Most pharmacists do not fully understand food/chemical sensitivity. As well as saying you want to avoid salicylates, it is important to spell out everything you don't want in your medication. See the list of 50 additives to avoid here

<http://fedup.com.au/images/stories/nastyadditive%20page.pdf> . It is appalling that lax TGA regulations mean artificial colours do not have to be listed on pharmaceutical labels. Wondering how this could possibly happen? The industry puts profits ahead of patient safety and regulators who were originally supposed to protect patient safety are subject to so-called regulatory capture in which people who work for regulators receive "incentives", toe the company line, or are afraid for their jobs, see Gotzsche blog

[1303] Just some encouragement for those starting their journey (February 2015)

It made such a difference for my two boys to discover our intolerances - their behaviour improved from being "those Camberwell children" to being just part of the crowd. We gave them a fresh start at a new school after being on the diet for about 18 months, and went from having the eldest bullied by both children and staff, to being well behaved and engaging in all the opportunities of school.

Failsafe also helped me greatly when I found salicylates were contributing to chronic pain - I'm much better without them. Hang in there, it's worth all the effort - Kylie

[1299] Do amines make you emotional? - facebook thread (February 2015)

Yep, and irritable. I get even more emotional and aggressive if I have salicylates - Linda

[1287] One liners (November 2014)

I have had diarrhea for 20 years. I eliminated salicylates one week ago, and have seen a dramatic turnaround! Amazing!I've completed three weeks now, with excellent digestion! There was only one exception. We ate out in the mall. Got bad diarrhea. Interestingly, it hit 36 hours later. A delayed reaction, that I've learned from you. Two days to recover. After that, no salicylates, no problems! Consistent good digestion! This is so fantastic! - American living in the Philippines.

[1281] Chromosomal deletion, a severe speech delay, global developmental delay helped by diet (November 2014)

Almost three weeks into our salicylate free diet and seeing some nice changes. I should add we have also changed to A2 milk and less wholegrain wheat in breads and cereals. My boy seems calmer, less oppositional and able to reason with. But we've also noticed a change in his fine motor skills...his hand writing has changed and he has done up the buttons on his shirt for the first time ever. His language also seems better, with lots of new words and a subtle change in the way he speaks.

Our boy has a chromosomal deletion, a severe speech delay, global developmental delay and sensory processing disorder so we've been dealing with a lot his whole almost 7 years! I kind of wish I had looked into his diet earlier but we are here now.

3 months later: We still doing low sals and things seem a bit calmer. Still some challenging behaviour but hes got a lot going on poor boy! Interestingly his craving for fruit has gone, I'm limiting to golden delicious apples, pears and bananas...max two pieces a day now - Sandra

[1276] Food intolerance symptoms were basically destroying my life (August 2014)

I underwent the diet with a dietician about two years ago - I'm now 38 - and finally uncovered what had been basically destroying my life for about a year before that - severe intolerance to amines, salicylates, glutamates, colours and preservatives. My symptoms are generally: extreme irritability; extreme sinusitis-like symptoms, including ear aches and imbalance, near-permanent blocked or runny nose, and general flu-like symptoms (body ache, chills etc; extreme tiredness; and skin problems). I use "extreme" in all of the above because I'm so used to people saying "That doesn't sound too bad". - Diego, by email

[1273] What has failsafe meant for you and your family? (August 2014)

After 10 years of suffering breathing problems which I knew were food related and not being believed by my GP or the Chest Clinic to discover Salicylate Intolerance and FS was wonderful - Barbara

[1267] Salicylate intolerance and dermatitis "I'm living again instead of dying" (July 2014)

Your site is a life saver. I've been suffering from many of the symptoms associated with salicylate intolerance, especially dermatitis. Poisoning myself on what I thought was an extremely good diet. What an education. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Four months later: My symptoms have completely resolved, simply through steadfastly following failsafe eating. When you've been ailing as badly as I was and to now to be well, merely by eliminating certain foods, that's proof. I have healthy skin, hair and stronger nails. No more frequent urination, no more constipation and my sleeping patterns are normal. I breathe easily, have strong energy and a clear, happy frame of mind. I'm living again instead of dying. The old saying "the proof is in the eating" is true. Failsafe eating works. My doctors agree.

Failsafe eating is being kind to your body and eating what's right for you.

Your research, diet and site is a life changer. Sincerely, I can't thank you enough - reader from Victoria.

[1265] One-liners (March 2014)

I have been on a low salicylate diet for 9 years and it has dramatically improved my life. I am no longer plagued by asthma if I keep to a low salicylate diet- what a relief to be able to breathe. Other benefits are- never catching colds and flus; no constant phlegm, blocked nose and hayfever; no headaches at all instead of daily ones; and no PMT. I am now full of energy and am able to live my life fully – Rosemaree

I am a recent convert to failsafe eating after a friend told me how she cleared up her daughter's eczema. Our family is currently on the elimination diet to try and figure out exactly which food chemicals affect whom and in what way ... Our oldest daughter's eczema and mood / engagement has already been transformed by cutting out gluten and cutting down on salicylates from term 4 last year. She is literally a different child. My other daughter's problems (6 yrs old) with wetting her pants during the day / sneaky poos / wetting the bed occasionally have absolutely stopped since she went off dairy - Edwina

[1260] I think I have a new child! (March 2014)

Just thought I'd pop and let u know the great success I've had so far with my daughter - I think we are going into week 3. Recently diagnosed with ADD. Have eliminated all salicylates from her diet and she is only having the permitted vege on the elimination diet and only fruit is Pear. No additives or Preservatives.....I THINK I HAVE A NEW CHILD!!!!!! Difference is unbelievable..... Can't thank u enough Sue and your cookbook is a saviour and I think you've also cut my grocery bill by over half - Megan

[1254] Growing pains - facebook thread (February 2014)

For my son it's salicylates. He also gets nose bleeds and headaches when he has gone over his threshold – Claire

My 10yr old has got better off sals (salicylates) – Leigh

Sals (salicylates) cause growing pain type leg pain here, without fail, every time – Susie

In our case glutamates and salicylates – Adelle

[1249] Sensitivity to sound (hyperacusis and ASPD) and diet – facebook thread (October 2013)

That's it! I'm convinced!....For the past 11 months my children have not been able to eat in the same room, let alone next to each other at the table without some kind of temper tantrum explosion, because my youngest (miss 8) has what I can only describe as some kind of anxiety attack over the noise her sister (miss 10) makes when eating anything. A couple of months ago my mum saw Sue Dengate on the TV talking about salicylates and how they can affect children and when she showed me all I kept thinking was...."That's her...that's what she's like." It wasn't only the eating thing but any tantrum she threw was extreme. Only at home though, my parents and husband were the only ones to see the full extent of it for a very long time. I looked into the failsafe diet and had been experimenting with things until I received my failsafe book recently. I was cutting back or cutting out salicylates where I knew they were, and had good results. Keeping a food diary I was able to link explosive tantrums which lasted for days to foods that I hadn't considered for one reason or another. So I began being a little more strict with it, recently cutting out preservatives where I could as well, (we haven't done the strict elimination diet). A few days ago she had a massive melt down, followed by something that surprised me....she was unable to make a decision, just a simple one....but as there was no logic in her head that told her how to do it, she looked at me blankly and said "I can't decide". She's a very bright girl so it was very surprising to see it, I think it was something I'd not noticed previously as it was hidden by tantrums when she couldn't decide something. Tonight, after not having preservatives and only having very little salicylates for about a week, she came to me and said "mum....Em was sitting this far away from me (showing me a few cm's with her fingers) and she was eating popcorn, and I didn't even hear her!!!" She was so excited and proud of herself, and once she left the room I burst into tears of happiness. She's been amazingly accepting of this diet, I've not kept it secret from her, and I believe she understands how its helping her and all of us. Thank you Sue Dengate, you've changed our lives thanks also to my family for being so supportive - Kristy

The irritation to noise is called auditory sensory processing disorder (ASPD). We have also found that my son who suffered terribly from it can show no signs of it when managed with diet. It always creeps back whenever there is the smallest of slipups. Two days ago when he accidentally consumed corn he was an emotional wreck on the couch covering his ears crying and begging me to turn the vacuum cleaner off. Today his reaction was over. I vacuumed in the same room and he had no problem at all - Emma

Wow! I never considered that! My two year old is highly sensitive to noise and so is my 15wk old. Both my boys! We are already preservative, artificial colour and flavour, and chemical free. High sals are mostly out but realised we weren't meant to be having avocado! Think it's time to fine tune the sals! -Kristie

My daughter has sensory/sound and OCD issues which are definitely magnified by eating a high salicylate diet. Great to you found it too and now know why she behaved that way - Jan

Thank you for your post. I thought this was not due to food but a part of the ASD, as our doctor & speech pathologist said! - Louisa

See also [factsheet on hyperacusis](#) (sensitivity to sound)

[1242] Salicylates and asthma - cough drops! (October 2013)

I recently discovered that I have a sensitivity to salicylates after getting a rash (not for the first time) which seemed due to taking aspirin for a cold. In researching what in aspirin I might be sensitive to, I came across numerous articles linking asthma and aspirin, and one case study very similar to mine where a woman thought she was allergic to numerous medications, but it turned out it was only aspirin, and the salicylates in mints that she was sensitive to. Each time I've developed this rash has been when I've had a cold, bad enough that I probably should have stayed home from work. In order to speak with people while working and not cough all over them, I use cough drops, the natural ones, which are loaded with all kinds of mint and mint-related herbs, and usually honey too. This last cold started on Christmas day, and after the cold left I was left with what seemed like asthma like wheezing and coughing, bad enough that I was using two cough drops an hour. Last week I caught another cold, and when I started to get a sore throat I took aspirin, and continued with the cough drops. After two days of aspirin (only about 250mg, maybe twice a day), I developed the rash, and worsening sinus symptoms. Imagine my surprise when in the course of my research I happened upon one of the failsafe websites, and realized how many things I eat and use (I don't like to use chemicals so I've been using natural products that have a lot of essential oils in them) that have high levels of salicylates in them.

Since stopping the cough drops and starting on some version of failsafe, my asthmatic symptoms have really receded, so I hoping some other symptoms will improve as well when I get some of the personal products - such as deodorant and toothpaste - more under control. - Glenda, Canada

[1232] Failsafe for more than 20 years, now 71 and "going strong" (October 2103)

I was diagnosed with severe salicylate & additive reactions 20 years ago. It turned my life around. I have been on a strict diet ever since and no longer have the fatigue, headaches, aches & pains etc I used to experience. Now and then I slip up and have insomnia and headaches but overall my health is much better.

I was so ill for many years, getting worse and worse with my GP inferring I was a hypochondriac. After a run around with a hormone specialist and a gastroenterologist I was finally seen by an allergy specialist. He seemed to think he couldn't help me until he put me on an elimination diet, and the result was amazing. I felt well for the first time in years. I have complications in that I have a couple of auto immune diseases - pernicious anaemia and primary biliary cirrhosis. However if I watch my diet, take my pills and get plenty of exercise I keep well. I don't know if there's any connection between my intolerances and my diseases. I am now nearly 71 and going strong - Denise

[1215] One-liners (July 2013)

Totally unprompted our 4 year old said this about "testing the foods on his red list" (salicylate challenge) "they make me feel angry!" - think we will stop the challenge there then :) We had not explained to our son we were doing the elimination diet for his behaviour, he thought it was so he didn't get tummy ache as he knows cheese and chocolate give him a headache and make him sick, so I was astounded when he came out with that! – Kate

[1214] FODMAPs not enough for my IBS (July 2013)

I was diagnosed with IBS about 2 years ago and told to follow the FODMAP diet to reduce symptoms. The last few months my symptoms flared right up again and so I dragged myself back to the doctors and a dietician and I have now been told I have to cut out salicylates and amines (at least initially) as that is likely to be my problem. After one week on the elimination diet I have noticed a huge improvement, apart from the fact I am missing all my usual fare like spinach, coconut, berries, tomato and the list goes on! I am so grateful though for the relief, I actually feel normal again. Thanks! – Lisa

(see also FAQs <http://fedup.com.au/information/frequently-asked-questions/diet-questions#fodmap> and <http://fedup.com.au/information/frequently-asked-questions/diet-questions#fodmap2>)

[1211] To do the diet or not, a facebook thread (July 2013)

Do It!!! I had a terrible prep year did the elimination and turns out she is intolerant to colours and sals. It was literally Jekyll and Hyde with her now we have calm and peace and sometimes she starts to slip and we pull the reins up on the sals , absolutely amazing the difference in food can make - def worth doing! My only regret is that I lost 6 yrs living with her like that and that the behavior specialist never mentioned food I had to think of that myself – Michelle

[1210] Bedwetting thread from facebook group (July 2013)

I don't know when he stopped because I wasn't expecting it, but I just figured he would grow out of it when he was ready, wasn't expecting diet to affect it. I should also add that when we challenge him or re-introduce sals the bed wetting at night starts again – Selina

Our son stopped at aged 8 in the first two weeks of full elimination, and it was a clear sign for sals, and preservatives for us when challenging, he also had bowel control issues with these as well (the sneaky poo's) our son slept through deeply before failsafe, but now seems an easier waker, as he can tell us about what goes on after bed, but has remained dry on failsafe, so no that theory might not work either - Ries

[1209] Withdrawals thread from facebook group (July 2013)

I found that with the salicylates challenge my eldest daughter took reacted within about 2 days and then it took a week to get back on track, but when we did the amine challenge it took at least a week for her behaviour to change and at least 3 weeks to get her back on track with the FS diet – Bronnie

[1204] Salicylates: a brush with insanity (July 2013) COURAGE AWARD

Our family had a brief encounter with the elimination diet in the mid nineties and then another longer one some time after 2000. Never supervised. We considered ourselves to be living a healthy lifestyle, eating lots of fruit and vegies, enjoying an alcoholic drink at times but not excessively and we all exercised regularly. Food additives ended up on the forbidden list. Energy levels were really on the low side for our age but that only made us try harder to live the way we thought health should be achieved. Of course there were some other problems too but they weren't very big or we just never got to the bottom of them and had given up really. Yes, we had eliminated salicylates from the diet at some stage but it looks like we missed the changes in ourselves. Perhaps a supervising dietician would have been able to keep us on track.

More than ten years after the first attempt at the diet, in order to cope with the stresses of my job, I decided that I would eat only fruit at lunch times, lots of healthy oranges and other fruit. A fair bit of fruit really because I was exercising about 2 hours every day as well. In the evening I cooked heaps of tasty vegies (taste means often high in salicylates) ...

A week later, I happened to meet a young lady and we had a chat. Later on in the week I met her again, just before she headed off to live 600km in one direction. At the end of the week I was off to live similar distance in the opposite direction. Again we had a chat.

A few days after the last encounter with the young lady I kept thinking about her. On the first day this seemed a bit amusing, like being in love but it was getting stronger and stronger and soon a reality check happened. What the hell am I doing?

1. I am a married man with children, I don't need this.
2. I hardly know anything about her, we had two brief chats and at the time I wasn't really terribly interested. Nothing happened between us.
3. She never showed an interest in me, this is just fantasy.

It got worse and worse. My thoughts came back to her all the time. Every 5 minutes of every day for the next 15 days. I saw her face, went back to the relatively few sentences we exchanged, went over them time and time again. Going around in circles. It happened during the day, when going to bed and it was also the first thing I thought of when waking up in the morning. Everything reminded me of her. Strong feelings were boiling up in me, automatic and unstoppable. Emotionally I was on edge. It was hard to concentrate at work, it was hard to listen in meetings. It was getting between my family and me.

There seemed to be no end to it. I had lost control but I could not explain why, which of course made it worse because I could not do anything about it. I was eating healthy food, exercising heaps, cut out the last alcohol because life was troubling me already as it was. No coffee, no tea, no additives, no smokes. I felt that I was close to going crazy or was I crazy already? I used to pride myself on thinking logically and having a very practical outlook on life. What had happened to me?

The move at the end of the week to another town brought a change in diet with it. Still a fair bit of fruit, but less. My brain got marginally better but would still be bad for another 12 days. By that time Sue's DVD "Fed Up with Children's Behaviour: how food and additives affect behaviour" had come in and I watched it several times. Then the penny dropped, perhaps it was salicylates? Perhaps we had missed salicylates the first two times playing with the elimination diet. I cut fruit out of my diet immediately since I was desperate to get back to normal. It took another 2 plus weeks before I started to consider myself normal again. Other things improved too: singing voice better and more consistent than ever, sticky poos less of a problem, sleep improved, bloating reduced, feeling of incomplete evacuation reduced.

This was the closest encounter I've ever had with a run-away brain. Needless to say, it was not a constructive part of our marriage, however, we have survived. This story embarrasses me extremely but perhaps others can benefit from it ... - by email

[1201] This diet is truly life changing (July 2013)

I would like to say a very big thank you for helping change not only my son's life dramatically but in turn the whole family.

Last year I put my eight year old boy onto your elimination diet. Before the diet my son was in trouble at school every day, he was argumentative, angry, hyperactive and overall his behaviour was negative and every day was a huge struggle. After discovering that he reacts severely to preservatives, colours, salicylates and amines, his overall well being has completely changed.

Not only is the household a much more calmer place now, also so is his class room. He would of been considered to be one of the naughtiest children in the class but now he is achieving amazing results at school. He competed in the National Maths Competition and got a distinction (finished in the top 11 % in all of Australia), he also achieved very highly in the Naplan and has amazed his music teacher by performing songs that are way above his year level.

Not only is he a much happier boy, so are his siblings and both my husband and I. Not only has this diet given him a much better chance for a successful future he is living testimony that this diet is truly life changing. - Paula

[1199] Some reports on low salicylates (June 2013)

Some of these reports came from readers after a Medical Journal of Australia article questioning the value to low salicylate diets. Details of the article can be seen at <http://fedup.com.au/news/breaking-news/immunologists-knickers-in-a-twist-about-salicylate-elimination-diets-for-children>

- We've noticed a HUGE difference in our son's temper tantrums and violent tendencies! - Julie, NSW
- We have been really pleased by the change in behaviour of our 8 year old son who is diagnosed with Aspergers (and ADHD). His oppositional tendencies in particular have markedly reduced - Marg, by email

- Our daughter is massively improved since we discovered you by googling 'explosive diarrhoea.' Love our happier little girl!! - Veronica from facebook group
- We are day 6 into the elimination diet, and having amazing results. My son (8yrs) was diagnosed with Aspergers a few weeks ago and within days a lot of his symptoms are reducing. The meltdowns are nothing to what they were. Plus, the skin rashes are almost gone too, yet we are still working on the night time bed wetting – Nicole from facebook group
- We've been on a low Salicylate diet for only a couple of weeks now and the change in my son is absolutely remarkable. For the first time this year he is having his first full day at school today. His attention-span and distractedness is still an issue, but to a lesser degree - Jo from facebook group
- The proof is in the pudding so they say and [my son] is the pudding! - Amy
- Low sals diet is "harmful"?? Who on earth did they pick for their sample? It certainly wasn't any of us! Nor any other of the thousands of very healthy, happy failsafers out there - Naomi
- No one asked me here in NZ. I've been nearly 60 yrs trying to find out what was wrong with me. Even the immunologist couldn't help. Now I have energy to burn! - Di
- Hmm bubble and squeak with rice popped chicken and pear crumble, for pudding . Philli and pear mountain wraps and boiled egg for lunch. Shocking diet. I would much rather eat processed ready meal with chips, coke and lcm bars for lunch. Ah throw a slush puppy in as well. Insert sarcasm. Yes this diet is limited but it is short term. Surely all of us are a diverse sample group with no bias other than wanting the best for our loved ones. You can keep your 5 veg 2 fruit wheat and processed marg. I will stick to my butter, pears, and cabbage – Carrie
- Just skimmed their article now, it's HIGH time there was some decent clinical studies put forward, particularly in the light of these criticisms (can lead to eating disorders?!) and the emphasis on NSW being "where these diets happen" ie a stab at the RPAH. I wish the RPAH would do their own retrospective study. Why don't they??? It's been years since they published anything at all on their work and what they do is positively life changing, not "harmful" in the slightest. I must say this study has made me extremely angry - Naomi
- They can come and study my violently sal intolerant kids. At 6 months, one of my sons cried for 8 hours after eating a small serve of mashed pumpkin. Even tiny amounts of mod sal foods like carrots and sweet potato brought on massive rashes and stomach aches. Wish sceptical people could see this stuff - Veronica
- Google "PubMed urticaria salicylates" and there is actually quite a bit there - some is food intolerance and exclusion diet but not specifically food salicylates, some is specifically aspirin, but urticaria from food salicylates is there too eg <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6148685?report=abstract> - Tracy
- There are a few things that jump off the page to me, the definition of "harmful" is one and also the insinuation that elimination diets are linked to eating disorders. Do these "doctors" have any idea about the causative issues relating to eating disorders? Because from what I recall from the Mental

Health side to my (nursing) degree, the evidence base clearly stated that they are very much linked to a myriad of non-food related issues – Naomi

- Diet success stories include recovery from eating disorders after going failsafe.
<http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/symptom-factsheets/eating-disorders-and-food-intolerance>. I can see how an elimination diet done incorrectly or handled badly could trigger eating disorders in those at risk - Tracy
- When faced with the alternative of taking mind altering drugs long term, I'll live with the small chance of minor nutrient deficiencies from a limited diet thanks. The failsafe diet as far as I know is actually quite a balanced diet if done properly - Lydia
- This is the best thing I have done for my son . He is a new man. All I can say is that he eats 100% better and a well balanced diet than most kids I know – Tanya

See more stories and science on the [salicylates factsheet](#)

[1194] One-liners (March 2013)

We've been on a low Salicylate diet for only a couple of weeks now and the change in my son is absolutely remarkable. For the first time this year he is having his first full day at school today. His attention-span and distractedness is still an issue, but to a lesser degree - Jo from facebook group

[1177] Asthma under control due to low salicylate diet (February 2013)

My son is 3 years old and we have his asthma under control due to the low salicylate diet he has been on since 18 months.

He still has a problem if he eats too many salicylates, an example is a few nights ago I let him have a very small amount of a pasta dish which had tomatoes and dried herbs, that was at around 6.30pm at around 4.00am the next morning he came into my bed and his breathing was terrible - fast and through his mouth, I had to give him his ventolin and it took him over an hour to go back to sleep in my bed he would not go back to his own. I had to take him to the GP on that same day at around 3.00pm to have his tonsils checked as the speech therapist thought they were large (the GP said they are a little bit but not enough to be causing him any problems), the GP also listened to his chest and said it was very good. I should have known better and will not do it again in a hurry. I am convinced the diet works and it has really helped William.

His dietician put him on gluten free as after about 3 months or so of the as he was not putting on weight as he should be. I thought you might like to hear that the A2 milk is helping William's speech, it has improved a lot. Also his appetite is much better and he is no longer constipated as has been since we started failsafe eating. – Louise, by email

[1171] Nosebleeds thread from Facebook group (January 2013)

Post: My 5yo suffers blood noses and we suspect salicylates. Has anyone else experienced this? We did the elim diet for our 2yo and don't think he had any during that time. Anyone else have this problem?? He gets leg pains too from too many sals (though he can have a lot more than FS levels) - Andrea.

[1149] Tresillian wasn't for us (October 2012)

Our baby was waking up to 15 times a night, but Tresillian wasn't for us, it was too harsh, it wasn't doing anything. We were supposed to stay until the Friday but we left on the Wednesday. They are supposed to help mothers with new babies but they don't seem to know anything about salicylate sensitivity - there were numerous similar complaints on the Fedup Roadshow 2012.

[1146] RN doesn't know about salicylates and sticky poos (October 2012)

I am an RN (registered nurse). I run an encopresis and continence clinic and am interested to hear more about what you describe as 'sticky poos'. I obtain great success with her management methods, but I currently have a case where the boy's faeces are so sticky it's like a layer of wallpaper on his bottom." (We would regard this as due to food intolerance – most likely salicylates - and would expect to see the problems resolve completely on the elimination diet) – from Fedup Roadshow 2012

[1144] Chronic hives due to salicylates (October 2012)

Thanks to your book Fed Up I discovered at the age of 17 that my chronic hives were due to dietary salicylates. But it wasn't until I inadvertently took an aspirin tablet at the age of 25 (it was the first time I'd ever taken aspirin - in the UK they are packaged to look the same as a paracetamol packet) - that I realised how sensitive I am. As well as the usual hives, my face and throat swelled so much I had to hold my head right back in order to breathe. (WARNING: salicylate responders beware: it is possible to die from one aspirin tablet. If this happens to you call an ambulance or have someone take you to the nearest ER as quickly as possible.) – from Fedup Roadshow 2012

[1134] Not just about children (September 2012)

I've watched your fantastic DVD three times since receiving it. It has made me go back to the drawing board, I think I missed salicylates earlier. You might want to reconsider the title "Fed up with Children's behaviour", it is not just about children I feel, and it is not just about behaviour either. It goes much further. Many people who are not concerned about children's behaviour could still benefit in a big way from the DVD. - Peter, Adelaide

[1132] Salicylates: Irritability due to daily aspirin in the elderly (September 2012)

Do salicylates have the same effect on adults as they do on children? When my grandson eats salicylates in fruit he is irritable and has a vile temper. The doctor says my husband should take an aspirin every day for his heart but since he started he has become grumpy and forgetful. We've been married for more than 50 years but the way he is now, I don't want to live with him any more. - Gail, NT (Yes, salicylates can have the same effect on adults. For salicylate sensitive seniors who need blood-thinning medication, clopidogrel is a suitable alternative. For those wanting to try the RPAH elimination diet, discuss this with your doctor first, see p115 RPAH Elimination Diet Handbook – S)

[1131] Gout from strawberries (September 2012)

The Sunshine Coast is a strawberry-growing area. My visiting daughter gave me a blender for Xmas and bought me daily supplies of bananas and strawberries. I was consuming half a punnet a day. After several days I was struck by severe gout, and it was excruciating, making walking from the car to the doctor almost impossible. Several passersby stopped to ask me if I had gout, and laughed at my affirmative saying "You've been into the strawberries, haven't you?"

Astonished, I told the doctor, who clearly was not impressed and prescribed some pills. I ignored the pills and simply gave up the strawberries. Instant cure. Testing the thesis, a few weeks later I tried some strawberries and the next day I had gout in, of all places, my left thumb. Just thought this experience might confirm for you your own conclusions (See gout and salicylates <http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/symptom-factsheets/arthritis-joint-pain-and-diet>) - Tony, Qld

[1122] Forgetful and stomach cramps on FODMAP elimination diet (August 2012)

I have been suffering from various IBS-like symptoms for several years and have finally decided to do something about it. A couple of months ago I went to see a dietitian and following her advice tried a FODMAP elimination diet for a month. Although there was improvement in some areas there was a decline in others. I became VERY forgetful and suffered stomach cramps when eating what turned out to be foods high in salicylates. – Sharon

[1121] FODMAP diet made my gastro symptoms so much worse (August 2012)

I'm a coeliac with ME/CFS who is still having major problems with food reactions (particularly gastro-wise; I get so much pain/bloating/cramping/malabsorption etc that my life is severely affected by it) despite following a strict GF diet. I have a feeling salicylates may be a big problem for me, and I can see that my diet is very high in them. I was trialled on a FODMAP diet by my dietician but it made my symptoms so much worse, and I suspect this may be because the 'safe' FODMAP foods are actually those that are highest in salicylates. - Alison, UK

[1114] A link between additives/salicylates and anorexia (July 2012)

Is there a link between food additives or salicylates and anorexia? Our youngest daughter while off diet is seriously disinterested in food. Between the ages 3 - 9 she was in the lower percentiles weight wise. With the diet partially sorted out her relative weight for her ages has gone up. There were also some indications of her being obsessed with low weight and being skinny. We did the diet for her behaviour - fighting with siblings and extreme jealousy that could not be redirected by anything: force, reason, removal of privileges or ignoring. That fits in with my own experience recently when feelings were controlling and consuming me totally and logic did not have any place in my life. It was very uncomfortable to say the least and it was due to salicylates. Peter, SA

[1108] Food intolerance story 20 years long (April 2012)

My story is similar to many of yours but it has taken us until Jan this year to work it out!

My daughter is 20 and has suffered bloating, runs, painful wind and, at times stabbing stomach aches which had her writhing on the floor and necessitated rushes to the doctor for pain relief, calls to afterhours drs, and hospital emergency. For the following days she was lethargic and her whole tummy area hurt. These awful symptoms which seemingly came with no warning at all were very distressing for a young girl living away from home in a Uni college, attending university and working part time.

She moved out of college accommodation this last year and has been in a shared house. Her symptoms got worse as the year went on until at the end of last year she was a mess. (I suspect she was eating 'healthier foods' since moving away from the college.) She didn't want to eat anything as everything she felt all food was the cause of her painful bloating every night, headaches and migraines, not sleeping well (she told me later she was living on panadol and would take sleeping tablets if she had to work early the next day) After Xmas lunch she was in a lot of pain and it was very noticeable she was losing weight.

When i think back we had been to the dr with various symptoms since her birth. In late high school, after a particularly bad stomach attack our dr. could only recommend wind tablets. It is interesting to note that she had glandular fever the previous year in year 11.

During her college years her dr recommended an elimination diet. Yay! Unfortunately it was the FODMAPS elimination diet which is full of salicylates. It seemed to make some difference for a while probably due to less additives and preservatives and of course she fell off the wagon as the improvements were minor.

Our next step was to have her tested for coeliac. We were desperate although from reading I was pretty sure that was not her problem. I was right. Expensive, invasive tests for nothing. She has not wanted to do anything else for a year or so but I did say to her in November last year that when she had finished her exams and moved house she would need to see a dietician. (In the past we had only seen what was really a weight control dietician.)

Late December 2011 I spoke to a friend about my concerns and she said one of her daughters suffered greatly from stabbing pains after Xmas dinner! Her eldest daughter who has just completed a degree in nutrition and suggested her sister might be sensitive to salicylates.

I went into research mode and found a list of symptoms for salicylate sensitivity. All of the symptoms she had been having were there plus many we did not realise were part of her problem. Ringing ears, ulcers in the mouth (at the time she had 5) weeping eyes, irritability (we thought that was hormones) awful rashes under her arm. Just about everything except chronic fatigue and some eye tic!

I continued reading and helped her start the elimination diet. The bucket affect was a revelation. No wonder we could not pin point the problem foods. I read everything and borrowed Sue's books from the library and passed all the info onto my daughter. I will buy the Failsafe Cookbook. She was quite upset as looking at the list of what she couldn't eat and combined with how unwell she was, she needed lots of support. I found recipes and went shopping. She came home for a few days and we cooked and shopped and read labels. So much is just knowing the alternatives. No honey but golden syrup fine, no olive oil but canola fine. So many simple changes that are so easy. We didn't cut out amines as she was upset enough at what she couldn't eat. I thought if she still had symptoms and she was in a more cooperative mood we could cut them out later. Also she had been to Zimbabwe to visit her boyfriend's family and she had been really well. They ate a lot of aged meat and I bet their produce is stored and picked differently to ours. She gave me the food from her pantry she couldn't eat and I sent her back with foods she could eat and patties and dips and muffins.

After about a week her physical symptoms were almost gone. No more bands of heaviness in her head, or headaches, really only some mild bloating when she made a mistake with labels. Not many mothers would be happy to get a text from their daughter saying they just had their second proper poop! But I was.

She has been very busy moving, house hunting, and finishing summer school and had some special social engagements so we have not progressed to the challenges. We planned the social events and she went prepared and still enjoyed herself. She was a little bloated (which seems to be her default

symptom) but managed well. She will start the challenges when she is settled. We are looking forward to it as we want to have a better idea of what is actually the main culprit. I know it may be more than one. I suspect salicylate sensitivity, flavour enhancers and maybe some preservatives. She certainly doesn't want to avoid food she doesn't have to!

Last night I got a text from her that said she felt she was not as scattered in her thinking and did not get upset and weird about things. She feels more in control and settled. Wow! These comments were after 3 particularly busy and stressful days. The physical improvements were the most noticeable at first but now the mental and behavioural improvements are showing. This has all happened in a month.

When I think back I think she has suffered since birth. She had reflux and after falling asleep would wake and cry for hours. Of course everyone said colic but even colicky babies settled sometimes. When I look at her baby photos she just looks pained and unwell. After about 4 months my husband joined me at the drs as my health centre nurse was concerned she was not putting on weight (no wonder! All her milk was on my clothes!) He told the dr we had to do something now as things were becoming desperate at home. The dr prescribed a drug that helped keep the flap at the top of her tummy closed after eating. I am pretty sure we also changed to the bottle because I was exhausted and she needed to put on weight. Well, in about a week we had a new child. Happy, smiling, sleeping putting on weight. I always attributed the improvement to the drug but now suspect it was changing to the bottle! In affect I was poisoning my baby!

She was quite good through primary school. Probably there were not as many additives and preservatives in the food and our fruit and vegetables were picked ripe. She did have some aches and pains, a rash here and there and we did joke about her lack of concentration. Nothing that really impacted her life; that was just her.

High school was ok but she was a child that always seemed to some ailment or other. Nothing too serious though. She found Year 11 and 12 difficult as she found it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. Also she had glandular fever. I am actually very proud of her to get through year 12 with an OP 8, work part time and live away from home since she was 17. In fact the part job she has had for the last 2 years has been a guest service agent in a busy Brisbane hotel. It is very demanding. Also she has worked really hard in 2011 in her studies and achieved excellent results. I actually feel so excited for her now as she has done this well with a huge health disadvantage, I can't wait to see what she does from now on. We have a dietician from the failsafe recommended list (email confoodnet@ozemail.com.au for this list) who is actually one of my daughters friends mum and she is helping with the challenges and reading my daughter food diary when things go wrong. I have purchased The Failsafe Cookbook.

If my daughter had been born now I am pretty sure we would have gone through the trials so many parents I have come across in my reading and on the DVD. This probably shows how much our food has changed over the last 20 years. At least parents today have to deal with it early in their child's life. I know this has been difficult for them but I think it is better than our experience as it has been over so many years and during some challenging teenage times for my daughter. Then again I have

read of people not getting the answers until their later years and I bet many have never come across the right answers.

I really wanted to write my story and also to sincerely thank Sue and Howard and all the parents whose stories I have read. All helped piece the puzzle together. – Sylvia by email

[1097] Headbutting due to salicylates (February 2012)

Last night I made a beef casserole which I now realise was probably very high in salicylates. There were no additives but I used a base of one tablespoon of tomato paste and about a tablespoon of fresh herbs from my garden and about 100mls of red wine, cornflour and just carrots and celery with gravy beef. Of this casserole my son would have had about two tablespoons (with some basmati rice). I wasn't sure if this quantity would be sufficient to cause a behavioural reaction but within about one hour my food sensitive son was headbutting my husband and just couldn't calm down. My youngest son who ate the same quantity had zero reaction. – Courtney, by email

[1095] Salicylate challenge confusion (February 2012)

We are introducing challenges but I'm not sure how to do it properly. We tried grapes last week and all seemed fine, then we tried a small handful of raisins this week and he's gone loopy again. Now I don't know what to try next and have lost confidence because I'd rather he didn't go off the failsafe, because he's so obnoxious, but I know he wants to widen his diet ... update one week later ... The RPAH salicylate challenge showed he reacts to salicylates! - we were sailing along at first but then hit a wall where his behaviour went downhill rapidly. – Denise by email

[1092] Pain in the bum 7 yo, asthmatic sister with frequent colds and ear infections (January 2012)

We have just started the diet today and my normal pain in the bum whingy 7 year old boy is already improved in half a day! I know its early days, but so far so good! ... Update one month later My son is doing well, doesn't seem to have reacted to anything however preservatives eliminated from his diet made a huge huge difference.

My daughter only did the diet as did I to help her brother. She has had a major reaction to salicylates, had major ear troubles when they were reintroduced. Funny as she is asthmatic and has had frequent colds and flu and major ear troubles for a long time - salicylates may have been the problem all along. - Sharon, by email

[1088] Severe anxiety from salicylates (January 2012) COURAGE AWARD

My daughter Rose is 7 years old. Since she was about 18 months old, we had problems with her waking every night with nightmares. Although her behaviour was not exceptionally good, it was not an issue at the time. When Rose started 4 year old kinder we started to notice that her eczema was getting quite bad and that it was not responding to any remedies that we tried. We saw doctors who just said that she might grow out of it. When Rose started school, there was a huge turning point. Her behaviour I would say was ADHD behaviour – tantrums, itching all over her body, stomach pains, still having nightmares, oppositional defiance and the list goes on, and the worst of all, severe anxiety with me leaving her. Rose's anxiety was so bad that she had to be physically removed from

me when I left her at school, even punching and kicking at the teachers. Rose would not leave me at all, even on weekends.

With trying to counteract the behaviour part, I stopped all additives and preservatives. Rose's behaviour became so much better. We noticed that her sleep, and feelings of anxiety did not improve.

After reading your book, I made an appointment with a dietician and started on the Elimination Diet. Everything started to improve with Rose, in leaps and bounds, except the anxiety. With many trials, I have now established that Rose is very sensitive to SALICYLATES.

I now have a daughter who is very confident, well mannered, has no problems sleeping, no eczema, nor does she have anxiety.

I can only say that without your help, I had no idea where to turn. The professional field let me down big time.

We have been doing this for about 12 months and I am a true advocate of Failsafe. I want to introduce this to our school. When my daughter was in Prep we had a lot to do with the Principal, as Rose spent a lot of time in her office, as they believed she was being naughty. Last year I was determined to prove them wrong by showing them that food did contribute to children's behaviour. I did often say that it was the food Rose was eating, but I know they did not believe me. I can now truly say that Rose's behaviour was as a result of the food, its additives and preservatives, as she is a different student. Well mannered, high achiever, leader material. Thank you. - Sharon, Vic

[1081] Our toddler was a little tornado on salicylates (December 2011)

My husband was one of the first children to go on the Feingold diet in Australia in 1973. His parents still talk about the amazing improvements they saw although on that diet he was allowed pineapple, dates, cauliflower and mushrooms. I think some of the improvement was that they had a local butcher, they made their own bread, and they never ate out because there was no eating out then. They had a wonderful local chemist who made them toothpaste.

Because of that you would have thought we would twig much earlier to our son but we didn't. We avoided tomato and orange a lot because from when he first went on solids he broke out in a rash and did again a few times so we just didn't eat them. But he got worse over time. At 15 months he would run up our very steep street and then do 4 blocks of the neighbourhood, with us trying to keep up. I'm now pretty sure that was the kick he was getting from the salicylates. His absolute favourite was apricot teddies. We used to only let him have 1 or 2 every fortnight but that, along with all the other high foods kept him like a little tornado.

My husband's mum told us about salicylates when we went away on a holiday. His eczema got really bad and we thought it must be from the chlorine when we went swimming. She suggested fish oil tablets so we got some for kids but they also had high salicylates. He just went hyper in no time. He kept asking for more of them and that night he screamed and screamed all night and kept scratching worse than he ever had. He had welts all over him in the morning.

We tried cutting out just salicylates and saw some improvement but it just got bad again. Then I went hunting on the internet, found your book and we talked with our doctor about doing the RPA elimination diet. The change was noticeable, the biggest being less extreme mood swings and going to sleep at night. Bedtime used to be a 2 hour stint every night and then he would collapse in exhaustion.

We have seen head banging on two occasions, well after we started the diet. My sister gave him some yoghurt by mistake with Annatto 160b in it and he was a very loud very angry little boy. He didn't really have tantrums as such but did quite a bit of banging his head, wouldn't let us near him. He didn't want to be touched at all and kept threatening his little brother with all kinds of nasty things. A lot of yelling. He did not sleep at all well that night needless to say. It was the same the second time. – Susan, by email (Please report similar annatto 160b reactions to suedengate@ozemail.com.au)

[1073] Some feedback from the Fedup Roadshow 2011 (September 2011)

The mother of a 6 year old who reacts to salicylates said, 'when he eats salicylates, he can't control his emotions and cries all the time'.

'I failed Tresillian', said one mother, and we heard the same about other baby management centres. Typically, there were extreme sleeping patterns – e.g. sleeping for 30 minutes at a time - with reflux, breastfeeding difficulty or other problems. Yet none of the mothers who spoke to us were warned about salicylate intolerance. This breastfeeding mother was eating a diet exceptionally high in salicylates through foods and supplements.

'My son has severe eczema', said a mother, showing me a phone photo of her 3 year old's terrible rash. What does he eat? High salicylate products such as honey flavoured cereal, strawberry jam and strawberry yoghurts ... we hear over and over again that salicylates are a major contributor to eczema, yet many mothers do not know about this.

[1071] This was the answer: SALICYLATES (September 2011)

My daughter cried a lot as a baby and suffered with severe asthma from a few months old. When I sought a doctor's advice there was not much support with the excessive crying but she was prescribed medication to treat the asthma. The medication did relieve the breathing but it hyped her up and caused agitation. At about the age of two I took her to a different doctor, she was really sick and he even considered that she may have Cystic Fibrosis due to the severity of the condition.

I breastfed and I now believe that breastfeeding may not have been the best option because our diet often consisted of tomato based pasta dishes, and also fruit and vegetables that I now know have a high salicylate content, which of course would have filtered to the baby.

As the years passed we were dealing with agitation, temper outbursts and ADHD-type behaviours although I never considered that she suffered from this condition and as a mother I always felt compassion and concern, and was desperate to find out what was causing this behaviour and severe agitation in this beautiful little girl. On the rare occasions that I would address the problem with a

doctor in many ways I was relieved that a diagnosis was not offered because I did not want her on medications that are usually prescribed.

When she was 10 years of age I decided I needed to address this once again. Here is what turned out to be the answer:

I had made a doctor's appointment to have one last go at getting to the bottom of this. I once again hoped the doctor did not suggest medication because even though I wanted help I really did not feel comfortable going down this road.

I was finishing my preparation to leave for the appointment. I had the radio and SUE DENGATE came on at that moment to speak about food allergies and intolerances. I could not believe it, I hadn't heard of Sue before but I thought "I have to listen to this", so I quickly turned the volume. Sue mentioned various additives and preservatives which affect many people but I still did not totally think that was what it was for my daughter. Then Sue mentioned SALICYLATES, immediately I found a pen and wrote it down (I had never heard of it before). I listened to the remainder of the radio presentation and then walked out the door.

The doctor still really did not have much to offer. So I asked him "have you ever heard of Salicylates?" He said he had, so I further asked he had any lists of the foods that contain salicylates which fortunately he did and gave it to me.

Reading about salicylates and learning where they are helped me to eliminate the foods from her diet and this was the answer. Life soon improved for everyone especially our daughter, including no more asthma. This is my story and I wish to express my gratitude and thanks to Sue for her wonderful work. – Lisa, SA

[1064] Salicylates: "they said he couldn't come back to preschool unless I did something about his behaviour" (July 2011)

I just wanted to say thank you so much for the website and books! My son has been on failsafe for 8 weeks now and it's like a cloud has been lifted from our family. We have our little boy back!!

Riley's physical problems started at about 2. His face was constantly covered in a horrible red rash. This rash moved to his bottom and his nappy area was full of blisters and skin so raw it would bleed. Sometimes it got so bad he couldn't walk properly because he was in so much pain.

At 3 the behavior problems started. Riley had little energy. He didn't play with toys much and preferred to be in front of the TV. He had a lot of fears and anxiety and most of all he was angry. Most of his anger was directed at me and he would hit, pick and slap me often. I would spend days in tears not knowing how to help him. At preschool it was pretty much the same, Riley had a very short fuse and the kids were all scared of him because of his outbursts.

Eventually they asked me to get him assessed because they believed something was wrong with him. I was told they couldn't handle him anymore and said he couldn't come back unless I did something about his behaviour. I tried lots of different things but nothing worked until I was told about failsafe.

The change in these short 8 weeks had astounded everyone. His teachers at preschool asked me who was this boy? he now is friends with everyone, hardly had outburst and often says I love you to his teachers followed with lots of cuddles and kisses. He has energy now. He doesn't want to watch tv, he wants to dance and run in the backyard and play games with me. He no longer hits me and our relationships is closer than ever. No more rashes either or anxiety!

He is affected by salicylates and we are soon going to test amines but I suspect he won't pass that challenge as he seems really grumpy the day after I have given him a banana or cheese.

I have been telling everyone about this diet and I will continue to share my story. Thanks so much. I can't even imagine how you have changed so many families. –Jodie, by email

[1061] Salicylates: Migraines due to salicylates (July 2011)

I moved to Australia from India ten years ago. With a change in diet following different food produce/products/ cleaning products/fragrances/toiletries - everything - I started showing all sorts of allergic type reactions. After three years I had to visit a GP who sent me to allergy specialist, who diagnosed the problem as salicylate intolerance. Since then I went on the elimination diet and reintroduced foods gradually from low to higher levels of salicylates/amines. Though a long painstaking process, it was definitely beneficial. I understand now the symptoms had started in India, but were not too frequent, and guess what, took aspirin in those days not realising it made me worse!

Bread was causing me major headaches. Now I always buy the white bap from Bakers delight, and avoid bread altogether on weekends. Am more a rice eater for dinner, so that's helped me in some ways. Itchiness and other minor things I can handle, (and believe me I think I have shown all symptoms from eye tics to not sleeping well and having nightmares). Migraines cause the most problems, and more so as I will definitely have nausea and vomit and will have to lie down in a quiet dark room till I feel better. I cannot take ibuprofen at all, makes it worse.

Eating out is a major problem, though we do tend to eat home most of the time. Family and friends have been most supportive, and cook what I can eat. At work I am always asked what I can have when we have the morning teas or lunches out, so feel quite special. - Mita, by email

[1060] 'Crohns disease' due to salicylates (May 2011) (July 2011) COURAGE AWARD

I have two girls aged 4 and 2 years and recently my two-year-old daughter Isabella had very bad tummy pain, bleeding gums, bad breath, a fissure on her bottom and blood in her stools. The first sign was the bleeding gums. They just kept getting worse and worse as we brushed and it hurt her to eat anything.

Then there was her tummy pain which was also getting worse. She was not gaining any weight (actually losing weight the year before but thought she was a fussy eater!) and is still very little for her age. I saw various doctors about her fissure and tummy pain and also mentioned her gums and no-one would help me. One doctor did say it was a fissure but didn't address the other issues.

She also had bad breath and was very whingy and clingy most of the time.

Anyway I decided to take her to our local University dentist as it is free and they are fantastic with kids. They ended up referring us to the Dentistry section at Westmead Childrens' Hospital. To cut a long story short they kept bringing people into the room until they reached the highest person in the place and he said he thought it was either Crohn's Disease or Leukaemia. After months of testing including a gum biopsy and an endoscopy and colonoscopy the Gastroenterologist confirmed it was Crohn's. They then got us back and said they want to trial her on a preservative free/additive free/antioxidant free diet. So off we went on the challenge to stop all these nasty foods.

They gave me a list of foods I could give her and a list to avoid. They said she could have milk, all fruit, vegetables, pasta etc as long as there are no additives. Anyway while researching one day I stumbled across something on your website. I knew of your website and it was helping me greatly but this day I was reading about Salicylates and Amines. I had NO IDEA what they were before that moment.

It suddenly occurred to me that I had been giving Isabella her favourite juice every morning, sometimes two cups. It was V8 Tropical juice which says it has no preservatives etc but I didn't realise about the salicylates. I stopped it that day and told her I had run out and had to go to the shop to buy more! (Saying that helps to avoid an argument!!) To my amazement her bad tummy pain stopped that day! I haven't given her the juice since and it's been about 3 months. Her gums got better, her fissure got better and her bad breath went away. She has had tummy pain now and then but I am fine-tuning her diet and think she could be totally sensitive to salicylates. I make my own washing detergent and wash her with Alpha Keri fragrance free but haven't gone as far as stopping my perfumed products like hairspray etc.

The purpose of this email is to send you a HUUUUUUGGGGGGEEE thank you for putting out the website and your books! I haven't come across anything on your site (maybe I've missed it) about the diet helping people with Crohn's Disease so maybe Isabella 's experience will help someone else.

If we had not have found your article about Salicylates then Isabella would have been put onto steroids at two years of age. The diet itself has changed our family greatly as well. My 4 year-old daughter is concentrating better, doesn't argue with me like she used to and isn't as emotional. Her learning ability has increased as well. I don't have restless leg syndrome anymore and I feel much better in myself.

The months before Isabella was diagnosed with Crohn's were unbearable and it was just horrible seeing my little girl go through all of that pain and not be able to fix it. Now, thanks to you, she is bouncing out of her skin and is a happy little two-year-old (with the occasional tummy pain).

It still brings tears to my eyes thinking about the past 6 months and what we've all been through. Everyone I run into I tell about it as there's probably someone else out there suffering but thinking they are eating healthy with all that fruit.

Update: Isabella has been getting through the capsule challenges very slowly. She didn't react to 'A' (I have no idea what they are) and 'B' she had a MAJOR reaction to so I'm looking forward to finding out what that was! She had all the symptoms of Crohn's back (except bleeding gums (although I think if we had of kept giving her whatever it was for a period of time that her gums would soon

start to bleed again). Her behaviour was also just terrible. Words can't explain how defiant, grumpy, emotional etc she was. She also started to wet the bed! I felt really sorry for her that I gave her that on purpose. With all the ones she has reacted to (every one of them except 'A') it has taken a good week or so for all symptoms to disappear. I have noticed with everything she has like additives she develops a sore on the outside corner of her mouth. It gets really bad and then when she is back on the plain diet it heals. Very strange but I'll be able to tell when she's lying when she's older if she's had something she shouldn't! - Shelley, NSW

[1059] 4 yo behaviour - the biggest shock was the fruit and veg (July 2011)

I am new to failsafe and have discovered that we didn't have a lot to change but what we have has made an enormous difference!

The biggest shock to me was the fruit and vege as the girls ate quite a lot of these, mainly grapes, strawberries, blueberries, apples and bananas with oranges and mandarins more recently (they are 5, 4 and 2 years old), and carrots, broccoli and zucchini with pumpkin and potato. I will be switching the 'bad' ones to the ones you have listed (not sure how I am going to go with this as only one girl likes pears and I can hear the protest to the cabbage now!).

We have never eaten a lot of takeaway as I have horribly sensitive skin (eczema and acne) and tend to avoid bread as it wreaks havoc with my tummy. I always believed fast foods made me (and since the children, them) feel awful the next day, not to mention the appalling behavior. There are lots of reasons for us trying failsafe, those I mentioned, then my husband has recently been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome and is asthmatic (worse I have learnt on sulphites). Our 4 year old is our test in life I am sure and she is the one in particular that reacts to artificial colours and preservatives.

We have long been eating mountain flat rye wraps in place of bread, especially on weekends for lunches and now they are more frequent during the week in lunchboxes. I usually bake all our smoko stuff and am more convinced than ever to continue doing that (just this morning we made the shortbread and cupcakes from your cookbook). I am much more aware now of Lily's reaction in particular to preservatives and salicylates and am starting to notice some reactions in our 2 year old. Funnily, the reaction does not seem as bad in the 5 year old, but I can see some things that she is sensitive too, especially since she seems to get rather nasty to her sisters after she eats those things, mostly the high salicylates.

Terrible thing when you start to look - just what I have been feeding my children and why they have been the way they have in terms of behaviour. I thought I was doing well too as we never had cordial or potato crisps and VERY rarely had lollies or other 'junk food'. I bought the organic fruit and vege and cooked most of our food myself.

Just a little story for you, we went out to dinner on Friday night for a celebration. Of course the children's menu was awful (chicken, fish or sausages, all with chips) and I thought to myself 'this will be interesting' as I had had Lily 'safe' for almost 2 weeks. The girls chose chicken and chips (the chicken was crumbed strips) and after they had finished eating the waitress bought them a bowl of ice cream with strawberry topping each. Before we left the restaurant Lily started yelling and screaming, crying, being really rude, obnoxious and just horrible. I left with her while my husband

finished up and paid for the meal because she was unbearable. The next day was quite a treat too! All this within 15-20 minutes of eating the meal. As they say, the proof is in the pudding (or in this case, the whole meal)! – Cindy, Qld

[1035] One-liners (May 2011)

I am currently seeing a dietitian for my salicylate problem, which is helping me heaps. I am not on the full strict diet any more as we have worked out I can tolerate Low and a couple of Moderate level foods but if I have too many then the problems start up. I didn't know about medication and perfumes, so I am going to go through my cabinet and start to replace. The funny thing was I didn't link my problems with my daughter's problems with behaviour until I was reading your website and now I see how it is all linked. - Fiona, Qld

[1009] ADHD: Denied enrolment at 2 schools (March 2011) COURAGE AWARD

I just wanted thank you!!! My 9 year old son has ADHD, ODD, OCD, anxiety and a learning disability. He was denied enrolment at 2 schools because they feared his ADHD would disrupt other children. He was constantly in trouble at school and has been suspended. He was frustrated and upset every morning and every night, at times he couldn't sit at the dinner table without crying from the stress he felt, he found it very difficult to cope from day to day. From when he was a very young age, my husband and I worked very hard at managing his problems and saw numerous specialists. Originally we took him off bread with preservatives when he was 2 years old. It wasn't until we were at our wits' end a year ago, with schools and counsellors telling us to 'medicate him' - that I decided to buy your book.

A year on, our son avoids salicylates and additives and I have to say I have had a recent comment from a friend who hasn't seen him for a year and she said 'we were so impressed with your son's politeness, his impeccable table manners, you two have done so well with him!, even my sister commented on what a lovely boy he is!'

We managed to get him into a new school, one that I believed would work with us to 'manage' his issues better. Then his new school teacher rang me to say 'I have had a beautiful week with your son, he is very respectful, very caring towards the other children, has lovely manners and we haven't had one episode of hyperactivity or disruptive behaviour, he has a lot to offer and is doing very well'

I have near cried with pure relief and excitement that the little boy I got glimpses off occasionally over the last 9 years is now that nice little boy all day EVERY DAY! and other people can see it.

As a parent who had tried everything to avoid medication, I finally feel we have found the answer to successfully managing a child with behavioural issues. I now tell people – Failsafe, Structure, Management, and above all: Understanding. Your book is gold to us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. – Leonie, NSW

[1006] Rosy cheeks, colic, poor sleeping, terrible nappy rash due to salicylates (March 2011)

I can't tell you how much I love your work!! We came across FAILSAFE after months of my infant son suffering from such a terrible nappy rash that he was quite raw. I wasn't helping matters by using baby wipes & soothing creams that had orange juice etc in them (Gaia brand). The Dr wouldn't believe that I was using the steroid cream he'd prescribed, & made me tell him exactly how I was using it - is there another way to use it? Finally, through our local Child & Family Health Clinic, one of the Nurses mentioned salicylates. My journey was far from over, however, going through the public health paediatric dietitian (who recommended that I feed my son rockmelon you should have seen him after I took that advice!! Poor little tyke!) & several other Drs & nurses before I stumbled onto a Dr who, when walking past us to her next patient in the waiting room (we were there to see another Dr), looked at my son & remarked Looks like he might have a reaction to salicylates those rosy cheeks that everyone kept telling me was teething was really a dead giveaway!!

From there, our lives improved so much, thanks to a supportive & knowledgeable Dr, dietitian & your Failsafe Cookbook. Our son could finally sleep, and his pesky colic disappeared after only a few days! All that we had been told was normal in a baby, and that we were made to feel like whingers for bringing up, were anything but normal when we got his food right (& mine, as I was breastfeeding).

He's now 3 years old, and it's so easy to tell when he's had something to eat that he shouldn't! He's very sensitive, even reacting to red delicious apples. We've now got another bub, a little girl, who has been so lucky that she has never had any real food issues, as I was Failsafe the whole time when breastfeeding her & of course feeding her solids. Still makes me feel guilty that my son had to go through almost a year with such pain, but at least we're all better off now, knowing about this issue. We still get funny looks from people who seem to think we're on some kind of fad diet, but we know what happens when we don't follow it. My main problem is that our family, and even myself, think of ordinary food as being a treat so we do give him non-Failsafe foods occasionally. What I need to remember, and I think I'm getting there, is that even if he enjoys eating the food, the way he then feels & acts for the next 3 days is definitely not a good thing. Making my son feel sick, irritable or aggressive is not a treat for him, or any of us. I am getting there, but I wish my family would stop asking me when he'll grow out of it and suggesting that he's getting better (only because he's eating Failsafe!! He wouldn't be if he wasn't!) and tempting my son with offers of when I'm babysitting you we'll go out & get some REAL food chiko rolls and hot dogs & coke . Real food indeed!!Grrr!!

Thanks again, Sue, for everything you've done, and continue to do. It must bring you such a feeling of vindication & joy when you read through the many different stories people have I'm often amazed at the different ways people react to various things. Without you, our lives would all be much harder and I thank you sincerely from all of our family. – Lyn, by email

[995] Salicylates: Nasal polyps & salicylates (March 2011)

I recently went to see an ENT specialist as I have nasal polyps that have bothered me since my 20s and I was due to have surgery to have them removed. The doctor told me that as our town was having problems with the privately owned base hospital I would have to go to the private hospital at

a cost of \$2400. He did also say when I said I used to have asthma that people who have asthma and nasal polyps are usually salicylate sensitive.

As we didn't fancy paying the exorbitant fee, I got your book Fed Up out of the library, remembering you had said about salicylates. To cut a long story short we cut salicylates out of my diet and one week later I was able to breathe through my nose. THANK YOU Sue. We have since purchased Fed Up and plan to loan it out to anyone we can help. - Geoff, NSW

[994] Salicylates: Aspirin-induced asthma and nasal polyps (March 2011)

I have Samter's Syndrome (consisting of asthma, aspirin sensitivity and nasal polyps) also known as Samter's Triad or aspirin-induced asthma. For the last 29 years I have been taking medications and trying to stay alive. When I found the Australian salicylate lists I was so excited, I could finally understand what was happening. I was inadvertently eating salicylates every day. – by email, USA (There are numerous less-than-accurate salicylate lists on the internet. The only figures we support are the updated lists from RPAH; ask for our salicylate mistakes information sheet: suedengate@ozemail.com.au)

[993] Low salicylate versus low fructose diet (March 2011)

So, I started FAILSAFE eating 6 days ago. We haven't done it perfectly as his diet is very restricted due to food allergies and the fructose intolerance. But I've removed the high salicylate items, particularly tomatoes, strawberries and cantelope; and we're really just having the good ol meat and 3 veg for tea every night. I've cut his fruit intake to 1 serve every 2-3 days.

Day 1 perfect behaviour although it was still like walking on egg shells.

Day 2 bad morning, good afternoon.

Day 3 good behaviour a little less eggshells!

Day 4, 5, 6 great behaviour.

When things are good he is the perfect gentleman, well-mannered a real angel. But when things aren't going his way he still gets grumpy but most of the time he can now control the anger. A week or more ago, he just couldn't.

Update 3 months later after doing the elimination diet with a dietitian: Things went really well for some time. However, my son was desperate for some of the non-failsafe foods, particularly tomato sauce and jam. So I gradually caved in, and allowed him to have some. Initially it was a little bit every few days, then a little each daily. Although I'm still careful with his diet, he mustn't be able to tolerate even these quantities as we've started to notice some of the same old behaviour. The salicylates seem to have a cumulative effect on him. Whilst his behaviour hasn't been as aggressive or defiant, I'm certainly noticing that he is loud and unsettled. He can't concentrate on playing with his toys, but instead races around the house and jumps on the furniture! So this week were back on failsafe - strictly! – Carly, by email.

What the researchers say: (See page 14 of the RPAH Elimination Diet Handbook 2009 available from www.allergy.net.au): 'Having excessive amounts of fruit especially fruit juice and dried fruit can cause symptoms such as bloating, reflux, abdominal discomfort, wind and diarrhoea. Although incomplete fructose absorption can cause stomach and bowel symptoms, it does not cause other symptoms such as headaches, fatigue or skin rashes ... improvement of symptoms after going onto a low fructose diet is most likely to be due to the simultaneous reduction of intake of natural chemicals in fruits and vegetables'.

[991] Speech: Diet got rid of disfluency and stutter (March 2011)

My 5 year old son has suffered from disfluency in his speech since he started to speak! He was an early speaker, and was putting sentences together very early, but would always talk in a very monotone evenly paced voice, a trait we are now told is quite common with kids who have auditory processing issues. We have recently had him diagnosed with a 'severe' figure ground problem. [the louder the background noise, the more trouble he has in processing what he hears - his actual hearing is perfect] I put 'severe' in italics, because he was tested at a time where he was not baseline; at a time where other factors were in play. Both the audiologist and the speech pathologist had other explanations for the stutter, which was most common at the beginning of sentences. Once he got started, the speech was more fluent, but still monotone.

The speech pathologist said his brain was moving faster than his tongue. He had an amazing grasp of language at an early age and his tongue would catch up with time. We discussed techniques in 'smooth talking' and 'bumpy talking', but aside from that the advice was that he would grow out of it.

The audiologist said that the processing difficulty could be linked to the stuttering as a delaying tactic while the rest of the information becomes accessible.

I don't disagree with these experts, but as time has gone on, I am convinced that other factors are more responsible for these symptoms than either of the explanations above.

We noticed, over time, that sometimes his stutter was worse than other times. A noisy environment always made things worse, supporting the figure ground hearing assessment, but at other times there seemed to be no obvious contributor. Tiredness, we thought? Perhaps new developmental stages?

We had already suspected that colours and preservatives made him 'high' and had eliminated all of those anyway. I made most things from scratch and bought very little processed food.

In about April of this year, we happened upon the 'Fed Up' information. We had just had about 3-4 weeks of hell at home. I was tearing my hair out and the tension in our house with the behavioural problems was unbelievable. His stutter was so bad, that it would take him 3-4 minutes to get through a simple sentence. I was trying to be patient and not draw attention to it as the speech pathologist had told us, but it was not only driving me mad, but for the first time, it was really bothering him. " Mu..Mu...Mu...Mu...Mum..... I....II....I....I.... wa....wa. wa...wa..... Uh, what was I saying mum? " If I'd put in every stutter, it would take up more than a page! Upon reading various

fact sheets on the website, I had an epiphany! I had put dried apricots in his lunchboxes for the 2 kinder days and 1 day care day a week for about the last 3-4 weeks. Just 3-4 each time, but I cut them out immediately while I kept researching.

Within 4-5 days of removing apricots [and no other changes], the stutter had improved, but was still apparent. After another week, other people started noticing the improvement.

That was the beginning. While the stutter had not vanished at this point, it was enough to make me convinced that there was something to all this 'intolerance stuff'. We got more serious, and finally started to see the gorgeous little boy that we knew was in there somewhere. The aggression all but disappeared, the frustration and the stutter were much improved but there were still times where things would go downhill again.

After hearing Sue talk, I decided to get much more serious, and undertook the complete elimination diet, including the elimination of dairy and wheat. Prior to starting, I spent about 2 weeks trying recipes, building up my pantry items, stocking the freezer etc. I believe that if I had not done that, I might have given up, fallen in a heap and put it all in the too hard basket. The changes in the household were amazing. I was spending a couple of hours extra in the kitchen every day, but with the elimination of wheat [I am convinced] I had the extra energy to do it. A week in, and his stutter had all but disappeared. It was as if he had suddenly grown up an extra year or two. He took adversity in his stride, he shrugged his shoulders instead of clenching his fists, and any remaining disfluency in speech I felt was because of habit rather than anything else. His voice became more interesting, his pitch patters varied and I am sure that he coped with noisy situations better. All of the 'autistic' tendencies which we had seen for years were improved. He read social cues better, spent much less time with his fingers in his mouth, coped with loud noises better; generally it was an amazing difference. His kinder teacher, who has watched this process with interest, remarked that it almost looked as if we had sedated him!

We are lucky in a way, to have a son who reacts so quickly and obviously to things. It makes identifying problems a lot easier. During our salicylate challenge, he went off the chart for silliness, and the stutter got worse. During a course of antibiotics for a bad bacterial skin infection, he got aggressive, angry ... and the stutter got worse. Every time we have slipped up with food, the stutter gets worse. It is our main indicator that something is amiss.

I have no absolute proof. I am not a scientist. I am not a speech pathologist. I am a mum - plain and simple. But I know my boy. I know who he is and who he isn't and these past 7 months I have watched him like a hawk. I know when he is up and I know when he is down. And I am absolutely convinced that his disfluency is directly connected with his diet. I am not saying that the diet is fully responsible, but added to other issues that he has, the diet is what has made the difference for him. A year ago, I was so worried that when he starts school next year, he would be teased because of his stutter. Now, I know that while we will always face issues with diet and behaviour, at least at baseline, he won't be that different from any other child.

And of course, I will be eternally grateful to Sue, and all who contribute to the Fed Up website. Without it, life would be a great deal more difficult. The one thing I am thankful for, is that I never let

things go. If I had just listened to the experts and not used my brain and my intuition, then who knows....- Kylie, by email

[982] Sore vagina due to salicylates (February 2011)

I react to salicylates with pain in my joints, also I get very tender, raw skin in my genital area and intercourse becomes very painful. I saw you mention sore vagina in children - makes me happy to know I'm not the only one - I have always felt like a freak - so thank you for your books - they have helped me tremendously! - by email

[975] Bedwetting and salicylates (July 2006)

I have got a 10 yo who is hyperactive and an 8 yo who wets the bed. I recently browsed your website and was astounded with what I found. I was feeding my children with additives just in their sandwiches every day from the bread to the cheese without even realising. I recently changed their toothpaste to a mint one and couldn't understand why one of my children was off this planet with behavioural problems and the other was wetting the bed a lot more. I would never have linked the problems to the toothpaste. I read about salicylates in the mint toothpaste and stopped immediately. The bed wetter has improved already. We have cut additives out of our diet and it seems that as long as we limit the amount of salicylates in fruit and vegetables that he eats, he doesn't wet the bed. – Tania, by email

[971] Fructose or salicylates? (October 2010) See update [993]

When my son was a baby, he suffered with reflux and eczema and was a terrible sleeper. He was breastfed, so I removed salicylates from both my diet and his. He became more settled and his eczema cleared up; particularly his dry, red cheeks. Gradually the salicylates crept back into the diet, and since he has outgrown most of his eczema and I d forgotten all about them.

However, I have a hunch that salicylates contribute to him being so defiant and angry when things don't go his way. Hisbehaviour has always been challenging, but has been particularly bad in recent weeks.

After complaining of bloating, diarrhoea etc a breath test revealed that he was fructose intolerant. So we started on the strict fructose elimination diet. My GP asked me a couple of weeks later how the diet was going. I responded that it was going well and that my son had not complained of bloating, stomach pains, etc since. However the thing I had noticed the most was his improved behaviour. I'm sure my GP thought I was a little odd, and commented that it wasn't something he'd heard of before but perhaps my son's behaviour is better because he doesn't have tummy pains. I wasn't convinced.

After a few weeks, we started a challenge by reintroducing the high fructose foods. He seemed to tolerate them well as long as he doesn't eat too much fruit each day. However, his behaviour has been foul! He seems more angry than ever, and last week I was wondering if he may be ODD. The 123 Magic which worked well for so long, now has no impact as he is just so defiant.

So, I started failsafe eating 6 days ago. We haven't done it perfectly as his diet is very restricted due to food allergies and the fructose intolerance. But I've removed the high salicylate items, particularly tomatoes, strawberries and cantelopes; and we're really just having the good ol' meat and 3 veg for tea every night. I've cut his fruit intake to 1 serve every 2-3 days.

Day 1 perfect behaviour although it was still like walking on egg shells.

Day 2 bad morning, good afternoon.

Day 3 good behaviour a little less eggshells!

Day 4, 5, 6 great behaviour.

When things are good he is the perfect gentleman, well mannered a real angel. But when things aren't going his way he still gets grumpy but most of the time he can now control the anger. A week or more ago, he just couldn't. It's early days, and of course we haven't followed the diet properly, but I can see a difference already. – by email, Vic

[969] Sneaky poos and salicylates (October 2010)

Regarding my son and salicylates, he found the last of the watermelon yesterday and today we had the worst case of soiling I can ever recall. He told me it just slipped out. He is nearly 6! He did try to clean himself up but as they do he made a bigger mess. We are very strict with his diet, well, normally. There's no watermelon left now, the chooks enjoyed it. Thanks heaps.

[968] Sneaky poos and salicylates (October 2010)

We did the failsafe diet as a family for our seven year old's behaviour issues. I would have said there was nothing wrong with the four year old. He used to poo in his pants sometimes but I just put it down to being too busy to listen to what his body was telling him. Now we've just finished our salicylate challenge, I realise how wrong I was. It was salicylates! And I used to nag at him to eat fruit and vegetables thinking I was doing the right thing!

[965] Gout and salicylates (October 2010)

My partner's uncle tells me he used to be addicted to tomato sauce and had to give up because it was causing his bouts of gout. Now he no longer gets it unless he goes to Fiji, which he does quite regularly, where he eats a lot of curry (so obviously salicylate related). He had no idea about the connection. Cherie (gout has been associated with low dose salicylates in medication <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174925/?tool=pubmed>)

[942] Another report of acne rosacea responding to failsafe (October 2010)

Over the past 15 years I have suffered from numerous things - CFS, IBS, Supraventricular Tachycardia, rosacea and itchiness. Post 2000, things were going along fairly okay CFS wise but I developed the SVT after the birth of my son in 2003. I had this corrected in 2007 (very long diagnosis!) but still continued to suffer the odd palpitation here and there. My IBS started in 1999

and I would swing from constipation to diarrhoea. My rosacea had been with me since 1997 and nothing would take it away. The itchiness started in 2008 and so did the headaches.

To cut a long story short, in January of last year I decided it was time to start looking into diet seeing no-one could work out what was wrong with me. So I went totally preservative, colour and sulphite free and purchased your book. Basically followed everything on the list of things to avoid. I did the same for my children. My rosacea disappeared! I also stopped itching and started to have less headaches and heart palpitations. I identified that sulphites affect my breathing, MSG affects my heart, something gives me headaches and 160b makes me itch. However, my diarrhoea and fatigue still remained. Eventually I looked more into salicylates (despite what the dietician thought!) and that was the final piece of the puzzle.

UPDATE 1 year later ... my rosacea is still doing well. I've tested my preservative theory on that one a few times and tried some pizza. I come out like rudolph! It's just so nice to have a white nose again, especially in photos! - Rachel, NSW

[935] Teeth grinding and salicylates (September 2010)

Over the last week we have already seen some improvement (in behaviour, bed wetting and teeth grinding) over the last week just by changing fruits to pears and bananas, stopping vegemite and tomatoes and switching to low salveges. - Karen, by email

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

I am a primary teacher with 3 children of my own. I first heard about your book 'Fed Up' when a student in my class was diagnosed with ADHD and his mother decided to try changing his diet rather than medicating him. The change in this boy was amazing.

I wrote down the details of your book to recommend it to other parents in the future, but ironically I now use your book myself as my six year old has just been diagnosed with ADHD. We had been eating a diet low in artificial additives for years after discovering that my children were reacting to the preservative 282 in bread but have just recently begun failsafe eating after my son's diagnosis. In doing so we discovered that all 3 of our children were reacting to salicylates. Even my 7 year old daughter who had been irritable all the time and difficult to get along with has changed into a happy, co-operative child since changing her diet. We hadn't even realised that she was affected by the natural food chemicals.

Our son who was diagnosed with ADHD has changed so much that at a recent doctor's visit the GP looked at him sitting quietly and said, "He doesn't have ADHD!" The doctor prescribed antibiotics to clear his cough and after one dose of antibiotics (with preservative and flavour) all his symptoms returned. We are now more sure than ever that food is the cause of his behavioural problems.- Cara, NSW

[876] Our tonsillitis and diet experiment (November 2009)

About 3 weeks ago we decided to do a "mini" salicylate challenge with our 5 year old twin boys as it had been 8 months on the diet, and we thought we'd just give it a go, just to see (salicylates are our biggest difficulty when it comes to things they really WANT to eat). So they had things like a bowl of berries with icecream, a few Pink Lady apples, some pineapple etc over the week. By the end of the week one had tonsillitis (had not had it since we began the diet) with a vengeance. He hit a high temp of 40.1 degrees, and his tonsils were bigger, and more pus-filled than ever before! Three days later, his brother came down with it ... same, worse than ever before (he hit a new record high temp in this house of 40.3 degrees).

Anyway, thought you'd be interested. I'm convinced that the salicylates caused a shock to their immunity ... and hello, back to tonsillitis. Thankfully our GP is now convinced that the diet has made a huge difference also ... and was very glad to help us find alternatives for medication that did not have preservatives in them.

The one thing I will say is that we feel particularly vindicated regarding this diet. We know we are now doing the right thing, and certainly have some 'proof' now for all of those who don't understand or believe why we are doing this with our children. - Jenny M, by email

[869] Salicylate reactions to Vapouriser and Vicks chest rub (November 2009)

I have two boys aged 4 and 5. We are two and a half weeks into the diet and I had been starting to get very excited about improvements in the boys behaviour. Until yesterday. The boys share a room and during the night my younger one woke up snuffly so I rubbed some Vicks Baby Balsam (contains Petrolatum, Eucalyptus Globulus, Parfum, Rosmarinus Officinalis, Cocos Nucifera, Paraffinum Liquidum, Aloe Barbadensis, Lavandula Augustifolia) on his chest.

Wow! When they woke in the morning it was just like the bad old days. They pulled their room apart looking for a toy, they were demanding and silly and unreachable (wouldn't listen!). Could this have been caused by the Vicks? Even though the older boy didn't have it on his skin, just spent a couple of hours in a closed bedroom with his brother.

A couple of months ago we were regularly using a vapouriser, with fluid containing menthol, camphor, methyl salicylate, pine oil and eucalyptus oil. Could this have caused some of the behaviour that lead me to try the diet in the first place? – Jane, by email (Yes! – those products are like a salicylate challenge due to inhaled salicylates, also absorbed through the skin. They are considered to be ineffective, dangerous and responsible for children hospitalized each year, see warnings from Poisons Information Centres:

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/seasons_dangers/sd_winter.asp)

[860] Very sore and red vagina due to high salicylate lip-balm

We are currently in the midst of an incredible food reaction, brought about by less than a week's worth of lip-balm! Our daughter developed a cold-sore about a month ago as a part of the withdrawals associated with going back onto the very basic elimination diet after we'd let a few too many fruits and veges creep back into our diet. Once it healed I decided to get her some lip-balm, as

cracked lips had proceeded the cold-sore. Her behaviour started deteriorating after about three days, culminating on day six (yesterday) in difficulty following instructions, defiance, extreme sensitivity (tears, screaming, sulking), kicking and attempting to isolate herself when upset. Also, a very sore and red vagina (poor little thing). The only thing I had changed was the lip-balm, minute amounts, twice a day (I'd kept hold of it so I knew she wasn't slathering it on). The ingredient list - Coconut oil, beeswax, sweet almond oil, peppermint oil, Vitamin A, lanolin, comfrey root extract, rosemary extract. I had realised that all bar the Vitamin A and lanolin weren't Failsafe, but made the mistake of thinking it was such a small amount it wouldn't matter. Luckily, once my daughter and I had figured out what was making her feel bad (I always get her to work it out with me, even at four) she decided that she'd give the lip-balm away (literally - "but I love it! I want someone in my family to have it, I'll give it to Uncle Ian..."). I'm going to try pure lanolin, and hopefully that will work out better. It really high-lights that one small mistake can make all the difference!

[854] A GP's opinion about salicylates in foods (August 2009)

My son's preschool required a letter from a doctor confirming that Charlie couldn't eat salicylates (because lunches were provided).

When I told him Charlie reacts to salicylates in food with eczema, asthma and behavioural problems, my GP said that made sense, since people with asthma are told not to take aspirin because it is high in salicylates.

I was astounded. "Then why don't you tell them not to eat high salicylate foods?"

He replied honestly and from the heart that as doctors, they weren't trained in nutrition and so they didn't know about salicylates in foods. - Helen, NSW

[841] Eczema-type rash linked with rosemary extract in Farex (August 2009)

I started our 5 month old on solids. She had a few days of farex (ingredients: ground rice, vegetable oil, vitamin c, antioxidant (rosemary extract), mineral (iron)). I noticed that she came out in a rash on her legs, the bubble eczema type rash. She has always had some form of redness behind her knees under her chin and in the creases (wet areas I call them) but this was much more obvious and red. I stopped the cereal and it settled down. I started again yesterday and the rash is back. I am worried that she will have skin problems that may be food intolerance and I want to do the best thing for her from the start. I have a friend whose daughter has such severe eczema and I just don't want to go down that path of creams etc. If I can do the right things for her from the start I will try. – by email (Rosemary is high in salicylates; salicylates are commonly implicated with eczema. You can make your own baby rice cereal: cook plain white rice with water, breastmilk or formula and puree in a blender)

[839] Eczema related to salicylates and wheat in a breast-fed baby (August 2009)

Our baby suffered severe eczema for 8 months and was in wet bandages for 4 months straight. We were also using advantan cortisone cream on her every night. At 7 months old both my breastfed baby and myself (mother) did the RPA Elimination Diet which made no difference to her skin condition. She has allergies to dairy, soy, egg and peanut which she never consumed herself and

which I stopped eating when she was 6 months old and still breastfed. After the dermatologist from the RCH said that it was most likely a food intolerance causing the eczema (she was 13 months), I contacted you again and then tried removing salicylates from her diet again as she was no longer breastfed. Within about 5 days she went from being in wet bandages, very itchy, irritated and hyperactive to skin almost completely clear and requiring only tiny amounts of cortisone. She also became a much happier baby. We have since discovered she also gets eczema from eating wheat. She is on a very limited diet because of her food intolerance and allergies but we are giving her some Neocate to try to make up for what she's missing out on. Thanks so much for the tip on salicylates, although it is hard feeding her on a limited diet, it was much harder seeing her suffering, using steroids on her skin and keeping up with the constant bandaging. – by email, Vic

[829] Rhinitis - brief reader comments (July 2009)

- My son had an allergic rhinitis type of reaction with red swollen eyes and nose and really bad sneezing attacks to some fenugreek capsules I gave him once because it was suggested that they would help with his allergies. Talk about irony. He also reacted similarly to a chickpea falafel from the kebab shop. This was before I knew anything about salicylates.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[811] Terrible debilitating headaches/migraines from salicylates (June 2009)

I have always suffered terrible, debilitating headaches/ migraines! After several brain scans the doctor recommended I take medications as a preventative measure, this would be a life long therapy. Not being keen I went armed with your books and stated I wished to try this failsafe diet first. My doctor supported my wishes with some skepticism. My success has been life changing! I have lost 8 kilos (not that I was looking towards this goal), no headaches until my salicylate challenge and a healthy and happy family all round. Thank you for your time and efforts. – Tania, QLd

[807] The 'anti-inflammatory effect': back pain and arthritis helped by low salicylates (June 2009)

I am 60 and since March 2005 (4 years) have been avoiding salicylates and wholemeal bread to help with arthritis and back pain. I have noticed a really big improvement in the long term. I no longer have pain or jangly nerves and no trouble with stairs. The pleasure is back into walking. When my back gets sore it doesn't seem to go into that spiral that it used to, laying me up for days. It complains a bit, but doesn't seize up anymore. I call it an anti-inflammatory effect. Somehow the vicious circle seems to be interrupted.

I think keeping muscles strong is also very important for backs and health in general so I bought myself an electric bike (you have to pedal but you can turn on the oomph if you need it). That represented a big increase in activity as I did two very big hill climbs a couple of times a week over the summer. – Helen, by email

[799] Warning: Perfumes in masks for kids' anaesthetics (June 2009)

I work in an operating theatre. One day last week we had a few kids on the list and I asked what the awful smell was. The result after process of elimination was, it was the oxygen masks. It seems that the kid size oxygen masks now come scented. I'm referring to the masks they hold over the face as the patient is going to sleep. I asked why they are scented and apparently it's supposed to be less stressful for the kid if it can smell something nice.

SO, to the parents of kids that are sensitive to smells, make sure you ask the anaesthetist about the masks if your child needs an operation. I don't know if we've still got unscented ones, I couldn't find any (but that doesn't mean anything). I made a point of letting them know it could cause major issues for kids with problems and all I could get as a response was, "but it's non allergenic". AARRGGGHHH!! We've got cherry and strawberry, which don't really smell like they should. - Jane, by email (Like the fruit they represent, strong fruit flavoured perfumes will be high insalicylates).

[796] Kids get thrush from salicylates (June 2009)

My kids (3-year-old and 15-month-old) get thrush as a sals reaction ... Many thanks for all of your work. I just can't thank you enough for the difference in my kids – M from NZ

[795] Thrush from a supplement (June 2009)

I have been wondering why I was regularly getting thrush despite being on a low salicylate diet. Then I challenged with a multivitamin I had been using until recently (not one recommended by RPA) and it gave me thrush immediately. – Lea, NSW

[794] Thrush and a preserved herbal drink (June 2009)

I am interested in the possible effects of sodium benzoate. I note that this preservative is used in an aloe vera drink. When I increased my dose of the aloe vera drink, it was around the same time that I developed a case of candida. [Aloe vera contain salicylates, so it could be a combination of the salicylates in the drink as well as sodium benzoate preservative which is chemically very similar to salicylates.] - by email

[793] Urinary urgency in a nine-year-old (June 2009)

I have a nine-and-half-year-old daughter who has a day and night time bladder problem (urinary urgency) since the age of 3. I have seen all the specialists, psychologists, and natural helpers available. By the age of 8 she was, as it seemed, growing out of it. But after reading your book, Fed up, I linked it to preservatives, flavours and colours. Coincidentally I was cutting down after our son had behavioural problems, and I heard you speak around that time. I took your advice and cut out the bread preservative first and then other things, but I didn't take salicylates seriously yet, especially with our daughter because she is so thin and a fussy eater. Her bladder problem seemed to creep back when Grandma was buying strawberries for her alone, as she knows our son could not have them.

Then when her brother was doing the salicylate challenge she was indulging in all these foods too, and of course her bladder problem is so evident now. – by email.

[792] Cystitis and diet (June 2009)

I had suffered repeated attacks of cystitis and infections which damaged my kidneys. 'If you don't take these antibiotics, you won't live to be forty,' my doctor had warned me, and talked about kidney transplants. The antibiotics made me feel sick all the time, didn't prevent the attacks and probably set me up for irritable bowel symptoms later on. I stopped taking the medication, changed my diet and never had another attack. I had noticed that red wine and citrus seemed to cause my attacks although my doctors ignored this observation. 'Your condition resembles analgesic abuse,' commented one specialist. I had rarely taken painkillers but I had eaten a diet very high in salicylates which are part of the same family as aspirin. – from Fed Up by Sue Dengate

[791] UTIs, cystitis, interstitial cystitis (IC) and painful bladder syndrome (PBS) (June 2009)

I have had painful bladder syndrome for over four years now. I have no damage to my bladder lining so in Australia it is not called Interstitial Cystitis but I have hypersensitivity of the bladder nerves which gives me constant bladder discomfort. Diet could not control completely so now I take Lyrica and Endep to calm the nerve pain. In the US this would fall under the general umbrella of Interstitial Cystitis (IC)

My symptoms presented after a series of bad UTI's. I started to get burning after wine and coffee: well known bladder irritants. But as time went on I started to react to many foods and my bladder became more and more hypersensitive. In the US a million people have IC and one of the methods of self management is diet. Many people control it this way without medication. Generally people eliminate coffee, wine, vitamins, spices and a lot of fruits and tomato. The clue for me was the awful reaction I had to blood thinners after surgery. Thinking I had another UTI. No it was a reaction to a huge dose of salicylates. It is interesting that common bladder irritants are all high in natural and in wine artificial chemicals especially salicylates. I am still struggling to fine tune the RPAH diet as the bladder reacts to many other things like hormones, sex, stress but generally the diet suggested as the 'rescue diet' for IC is pears, rice, chicken, milk and green beans all low chemical has always helped settle my symptoms. - by email

[790] A case of cystitis – “OUCH” (June 2009)

I recently had a case of cystitis (or urinary tract infection) - fairly mild but still uncomfortable.

I didn't want to try herbal remedies because I knew they weren't failsafe but in the end I did because I was so desperate!! "OUCH" is all I can say about the whole experience. None of the herbs or naturopathic remedies I tried did anything at all to help relieve the infection and as expected, a fresh herbal mixture from a naturopath made me feel terrible - fuzzy head and a terrible night's sleep with lots of weird dreams!

Luckily, after some frantic research, I found info on d-mannose and it was the only thing that finally worked for me. Once I got some of the powder, I started taking a dose every two hours for a few days and it gave me relief very quickly and cleared the problem within days. Having been an IBS sufferer (pre-Failsafe) I was worried I might get some adverse reactions from it but it didn't seem to bother my tummy.

I'm also staying well clear of the salicylates too. I definitely agree that they are a contributing factor (they really do cause their fair share of problems don't they!) – Jodie, by email

[784] Morning sickness and salicylates (June 2009)

I am 15 weeks pregnant with my fourth child and once again I've had a big problem with toothpaste and morning sickness. It was the worst with the first pregnancy, basically, I would feel a bit queasy before brushing and as soon as I cleaned my teeth I would throw up. As in the other pregnancies I've also gone off a lot of my favourite high salicylate foods and am completely unable to handle caffeine and chocolate (makes me very anxious and heart palpitations). – Julia

[783] Morning sickness and salicylates 2 (June 2009)

I suffered from terrible morning, afternoon and evening sickness when pregnant with my son (now 7). The only foods I could eat that didn't cause problems were cheese on toast, bananas and chocolate milkshakes. [these foods are all low in salicylates although not failsafe due to amines] We also had problems with breastfeeding - he would throw up most of what I fed him. Perhaps he was sensitive to salicylates passing through the breast milk. Needless to say we gave up on that after struggling for two months. (he was far happier on solids at 2 and a half months). Later down the track when trying to solve his behaviour and asthma issues, we tried (as a last resort) failsafe eating, and guess what? we are both sensitive to salicylates but not amines. If I'd known then what I know now... by email

[728] Needed to be failsafe and reduced fructose for full results (June 2009)

I am still struggling a bit here trying to deal with fructose malabsorption and failsafe, plus other malabsorptions (raffinose and sorbitol) that mean I don't tolerate well any fruit, veges or legumes except for potato, celery and lettuce. If I increase my salicylates then I get anxiety and other symptoms. Basically pears, onions of any sort and leeks are on the banned list (as well as other veges and fruit) - which I have been eating a lot of ! This explains why I wasn't getting full results on failsafe eating. Jane, VIC

[723] One-liners (February 2009)

I react to salicylates with pain in my joints, also I get very tender, raw skin in my genital area and intercourse becomes very painful. I saw you mention sore vagina in children - makes me happy to know I'm not the only one - I have always felt like a freak - so thank you for your books - they have helped me tremendously! - by email

[715] Success with eczema (February 2009)

I started the elimination diet with my daughter two weeks ago and for the first time in I can't remember how long her eczema has finally settled down and she is so much calmer and happier. My husband and I are just so thrilled with the results we have got in such a short space of time.

3 months later: my daughter is fantastic, the diet has been a huge success for us and I honestly can't share it with enough people. I was just looking back at photos of her the other day and I couldn't believe how bad her eczema was, in the recent photos there was none at all. We now know that salicylates are a real problem. Additives seem to have an impact as well but I am happy that they are no longer part of her diet and never will be.

Since our success a number of our friends and acquaintances that have tried it with the same results. As far as I am concerned the more people who know about this the better. Before reading your book I honestly had no idea of the real effect food had on us.- *Abi, by email*

[714] Salicylates: this time we are 100% committed and the results are clear (February 2009)

My 7yo son suffered from asthma, and my 5yo daughter was borderline ODD, complete with sneaky poos, bedwetting - the whole rack of symptoms. We removed preservatives and colours from their diet with fantastic results - mainly from the removal of propionates and sulphites. I noticed, though, that my daughter's behaviour seemed to deteriorate when she had certain foods such as vegemite, soy sauce etc.

We did not do the elimination diet correctly the first time. We made the usual mistakes - not enough commitment, cheating, coming off it too quickly – and were misdirected in our conclusions - thought salicylates were fine and amines were the baddies. We decided to put our daughter back on the elimination diet after she failed to improve when we removed amines.

This time we are 100% committed and the results are clear. Our daughter was fine the first day of the salicylate challenge, a bit iffy the second, and by day 3 she was back to pre-diet days, even resorting to deliberately (in front of me) urinating on the lounge room floor. Add to this a constant headache, tummy pains and a small rash on both legs. I promptly cleaned out the fridge, and removed all salicylates from the house. Two days on and we are gradually improving, but what a shock!

An even bigger shock was my son's reaction. He was always 'the good one' and didn't seem to have any behavioural issues apart from asthma, which has improved greatly since we removed additives from their diet. By the end of the second day, he had stolen a can of coke from the fridge (dad's stock - banned for our kids) and drank it outside when he thought I couldn't see. Screaming, shouting, fighting, defiance - completely unexpected from him. Two days on and he is quite remorseful - and determined to stay away from 'those foods'. He has also woken up today with big black rings under his eyes, and a wet bed. No coincidence, I think.

I never imagined that food chemicals could have such a significant effect on health and behaviour. My daughter starts school next year, and we can now look forward to a future with more enthusiasm and positivity than we did 3 months ago. – by email, NSW

[713] Salicylates: Mood swings, irritability, white face, no energy in a six year old (February 2009)

My six-year-old son Noah's problems were moodiness, irritability, not really being there, and for years the white face and no energy that you described in your book. My husband and I did not know why Noah was going down the path of these mood swings and this year at school he just could not comply with what was expected of him. About two months ago I was handed a copy of your book Fed up and it was such a relief to think we may have found the answer. It is plain to see that Noah must stick to a low salicylate diet cutting out all the naughty numbers.

Unfortunately over the last few weeks with Xmas, we let the diet slip, and we now see the effects. Back on to the good food now for the entire family, and hopefully a good year for Noah at school.

I just had to write a quick note to say thank you - the work you do is so good and so important. I tell anyone who will listen about this information, it must be spread around for people to be aware of, mums and dads and teachers. – by email, NSW

[712] Reactions to head lice treatments (December 2008)

- My son is on the elimination diet and last week he had a MAJOR reaction to [a natural treatment] which I'd left on overnight. I was really stupid and thought I'd done the right thing by avoiding a traditional chemical headlice treatment - instead opted for this natural treatment (1% lavender, >10% teatree oil, benzyl alcohol 0.5% ethanol 20%) - obviously he won't do well when I challenge salicylates! - *failsafe mother by email*
- I got a call from the principal at 10 o'clock saying he'd have to be taken home to have his hair debugged - my fault. I had suspected the bugs but I didn't want to put anything on his hair while we were doing the diet. I had no choice. I picked him up at 1pm and washed his hair with [a natural treatment not the same as above] - containing 10mg/g melaleuca alternifolia - or teatree - oil. I returned him to school at 2pm. When I picked him up at 3.30pm, he seemed fine, but certainly not calm. At storytime/bedtime he was acting really silly and I asked him twice to stop before I gave up and left the room. He then had a tantrum with tears. - *failsafe father, NSW*
- I had to delay the challenge as they got nits a couple weeks back and had to be treated ... well ... didn't those chemicals send my kids haywire! It took 4 days for the meltdowns to stop, extreme ODD for around 72 hours! - *failsafe mother, by email*

[700] One-liners (November 2008)

- I love your site and have referred to it for years and years. I was given a low salicylate diet to reduce agitation in my Aspergers son when he was 2 years old, and now he is 15 and a half, he is a fantastic, responsible, loving teenager. - Teigan, by email

[692] Heart palpitations felt like a washing machine out of balance (November 2008)

Although I knew I was allergic to medications containing sulphur, I never realised to avoid foods containing sulphites and other additives. During the 1990s I used to eat fruit mince pies and dried fruits (because I thought they were healthy) and many other things that are now out of bounds. I also started to experience sudden uncontrollable coughing fits at the most embarrassing times, so always carried a packet of Fisherman's Lozenges to pop in my mouth on these occasions. I noticed that I started having heart palpitations which would last a short time, but got scared at times when they became stronger or lasted longer (I likened the feeling to my heart being like a washing machine out of balance). The Doctor told me to go to hospital when it happened so I could be put on an ECG machine, but with no transport I knew it was impossible to get to hospital before the palpitations stopped. I got a taxi to the hospital one time, but of course it was over by the time they got the machine hooked up. Eventually I linked these palpitations to the Fisherman's Lozenges and I haven't had any more palpitations since ceasing to take them. Now I am a lot wiser about the foods I eat and I am certainly a lot better for it. – *Gladys, by email*

[Fisherman's Friend lozenges are made from all natural ingredients and do not contain preservatives. However, they do contain licorice, menthol, eucalyptus oil and capsicum tincture all of which are high in natural salicylates – it seems that Gladys' palpitations could have been associated with salicylates in the lozenges she took to overcome the coughing caused by sulphites.]

[682] I was pushed to control cry my son (September 2008) [COURAGE AWARD]

I just wanted to tell you about the startling difference we have seen in my son since removing salicylates. He is now 18 months old and the difference is profound - removing apple alone reduced nearly all of his night wakings, and removing avocado and corn as well has stopped his moodiness, screaming and irritability. His reflux is more under control and he no longer screams during the day and most especially at night. If he does we know it means either he or I have eaten something we shouldn't by accident. I've also determined that he reacts to a lot of additives as well. 160b produces aggressiveness, defiance and screaming within 24 hours. I now have a really happy well behaved little boy. I was pushed to control cry my son due to his poor sleeping, but I knew something deeper was wrong. I'm SO glad I went with my gut instinct that it was food related. – *Taryn, Vic*

[679] Menopausal symptoms, hot flushes and failsafe (September 2008)

I put myself on the diet five years ago as I was suffering severe hot flushes, was continually tired, felt sick most times after I ate, felt fuzzy in the head, got cranky for no reason and did not sleep well at all. My life changed - I now sleep well, I am not tired all the time, the hot flushes stopped, my head is clear and I very rarely get sick. If I have a lousy day or night I can always trace it back to something I have eaten the day before or two or three days before. The worst offenders are additives and salicylates. I have always been a big fruit eater especially watermelon, and it has been one of the hardest things to give up, however if I do binge on fruits high in salicylates especially watermelon I pay for it with hot flushes and a sleepless night. I also get hot flushes if I eat chicken that is not organic which I avoid at all costs now.

I see a lot of women I work with suffering with menopausal symptoms and I think myself extremely lucky that I found and was prepared to give failsafe eating a try. Unfortunately you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink. These women as many other people I talk to don't believe it could be that simple and are not prepared to give it a go, silly them. -*by email*

[676] Salicylate reaction to NSAIDs and Cox 2 inhibitors (September 2008)

I just wanted to let you know that some people with salicylate sensitivity do not just react to NSAIDS. Cox2 inhibitors such as Celebrex can also be a concern in 5-10 per cent of people. I fall into this group and I am unable to take any prescription anti-inflammatories apart from prednisolone. Fish oil (if tolerated in high doses) is an excellent alternative for me and thought your readers may benefit from this. It was known that I had reactions to NSAIDS and aspirin yet when I was trialled on Cox 2 no mention was made that there could be a possible cross reaction (<http://www.allergy.org.au/content/view/105/117/>). I was basically told that I was unusual without any explanation other than for me to try others would be life threatening. If it helps one other person to know that this is possible then what I went through is worth it. – *by email, Vic*

(For more about [fish oil supplements](#) - the writer of this email does not react to amines and is using Blackmores fish oil)

[651] Salicylates and breastfeeding: from irritable screaming baby to bliss (September 2008)

We started our 1-year-old on the elimination diet, and it has been absolute bliss. He has changed from being an irritable, screaming baby, to a contented playful little boy. So far we have found that he is very sensitive to salicylates.

For the first ten days of Noah's life, everything seemed to be all right, but when he was 11 days old I had a bout of mastitis, and that was when his crying - or rather screaming - started. He seemed to be in pain when feeding, pulling away from the breast, arching his back and screaming. He almost never slept, wanting to feed every two hours, sometimes even more frequently. His worst times were from 12am-4am, just screaming constantly. It was impossible to drive with him anywhere as he would cry and scream non-stop in his car seat. The doctors told me it's just colic and he will grow out of it sooner or later. He also had this rash mostly on his back which the doctors said was probably just a heat rash or something, nothing to worry about.

By the time Noah was five months old, I couldn't take his constant screaming anymore, and he still had all the above symptoms. He was reaching his milestones, but wasn't interested in playing on his own. I was carrying him around for most of the day, and even then he was still moaning away. I tried some baby rice cereal, but he would vomit after each feed, so I stopped that. I introduced some other baby food (oats and fruits) which he seemed to tolerate better, but he was still screaming most of the time. Reading a lot on the internet, I came to the conclusion that he might have a food allergy. (This seemed quite logical as I have a 9-year-old daughter who is allergic to numerous things and has anaphylaxis reaction with peanuts). I eliminated all dairy, egg, wheat, and soy from my diet as well as Noah's. His rash went away in just a few days, and he seemed to be crying a little bit less, but other than that there was no real difference.

When he was six months old I convinced my GP that I needed to see the paediatrician. What a disappointment, the paediatrician told me that I was just imagining things as Noah was looking healthy and growing well. He told me to come back when he was a year old if I still thought there was a concern. So the next few months we stayed on that 'homemade elimination diet' of mine, taking everyday as it came. Noah was not interested in playing with his brother (7) or sister, crying most of the days, and sleeping poorly at night. A few weeks before he turned one I decided to talk to my GP again, tell him I want to see an allergist, because I was more convinced than ever that Noah had some kind of allergy. That was the best thing I could have done. Noah was tested and we found out he is allergic to egg, and the doctor explained to me about food intolerance, which I knew nothing about.

We were put on the elimination diet and within three days we could see the amazing changes in Noah. He was actually playing with his siblings and on his own, not wanting to be picked up the whole time, and sleeping through the night. What a joy it was. We introduced the salicylates first, and by the morning of the second day he was back to his old self. That night he screamed the whole time and for the first time in a long while he pulled away from the breast again. We went back to the basic diet again. It went all right but after a few days he was again irritable. After searching for the problem I came to the conclusion that it was the vanilla in the vanilla soymilk he had been drinking. I

cut that out of his diet and things went smoothly again. We seem to be on the right track now. Thanks for the great books, they're a really big help. – *Jeannette, by email*

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

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

[638] Getting to the bottom of asthma/rhinitis (May 2008)

We have gone failsafe before but I never managed to get to the bottom of the problem for my son's asthma/allergic rhinitis. I knew it was food, and suspected colours and preservatives. The dietitian you recommended was very good and we had good results with the elimination diet. Because of the asthma she wouldn't challenge MSG, preservatives or colours. It turns out our son started to wheeze about day 6 of the salicylate challenge. After two days of the amine challenge we gave up because he was so ANGRY (but not wheezing). Since then we have been to an allergist and discovered he is allergic to dust mites, some grass pollens and horse hair (we knew this one). We know we can minimise his symptoms and reactions to these allergens by keeping his diet failsafe, and are considering the de-sensitization path for at least the dust mites – email, Vic.

[634] Silent reflux, gastro, extreme nappy rash – months of needless medication (February 2008) WINNER OF THE COURAGE AWARD

My 13 month-old son has had silent reflux (just weaned him off losec now), and yet still has bad gastro problems - excessive burping, difficulty swallowing/coordination with swallow and breathing, tummy aches (frequent back arching, screaming and night waking all the time). My paed has recommended an immunologist but reading your website it seems we need to do a diet approach for intolerances.

I have always been careful with my diet as I breastfed him avoiding foods that were known to cause wind. I even saw a dietitian out of desperation when he was a little babe - who took my money and told me breastmilk is not affected by what Mum eats. My instincts told me otherwise. I know that strawberries, tomatoes, stock, gravy (to some extent), sausages (two nights in a row), citrus, onion and ham produces bad painful gastro reactions in him. Yet despite avoiding these, our problems still continue. If we eat out, guaranteed he will have a bad night in the next 24 hrs and bad poos for days after. My son has never had a normal poo - even on breastmilk. Acid smell is very common, and it

produces the worst nappy rash I've ever seen with skin completely gone and large patches of exposed sores.

Two weeks later ...

In the two weeks since I first emailed you from sheer desperation, I almost cry every time I think about how my little son's severe gastro problems have so simply and easily disappeared. He slept through the night 48 hrs from our first meal of chicken fried in golden syrup with pasta (the only quick makeshift meal I could make the first night after I emailed you!). His reactions of reflux, pain in tummy, badly burnt bottoms (v. extreme), excessive night waking and festy burps have all disappeared!!!! I have spent the past 13 months in a sleep deprived land (lasting on about 4 random hours a night on average), with my daughter not getting much quality mum attention and my husband declaring 'no more, this is it re: kids'.

Now I have a son who in two weeks has spoken five extra words, gained 600g weight, sleeps hard, eats hard, plays hard (every mum's dream), plus two new teeth - and generally very alert, smart, and most of all, wakes from his sleep playing in his cot – no screaming. Two days after I started with that first crude meal I woke in the morning to hear his toy whizzing around, and not him – a dark cloud just physically lifted from my body and I just knew this was the last piece of the puzzle of our long journey. I continued the diet from the info on your internet site and saw the dietitian you mentioned. The other amazing thing is that my husband is a completely different man (see story [630] 'No need for Beyond Blue due to diet').

I have now seen three dietitians, three paed's and a whole swank of GPs. I could have saved my son months and months of pain and high levels of losec medication. The medical profession has a lot to answer for, not listening to Mum's intuition. We had attended a feeding clinic where they have sessions with a dietitian, speech pathologist, and child health nurse (3 with you and bub) to work out reflux issues. My son had all three problems - still has swallow/coordination problems, and is very very cautious with food textures.

I spent most my time in these clinics (been 3 times already) talking diet - and you know I remembered this morning out of nowhere that the dietitian in these clinics did say something like: 'tomatoes, strawberries, stock - yes they contain salicylates, ahh but you don't need to worry about that. That's too much detail.' I did question her again on it, but I forgot what the 'salicylate' word was at our next visit and ended up sounding stupid. I was nearly there with my list of existing reacting foods but did not have the expertise to link them together. I thought it was acids affecting my son and sugar affecting my husband. Oh well. Move forward. At least I have my husband back again and a gorgeous boy we can all enjoy. :) – Fiona, ACT

[633] Severe eczema related to salicylates and fragrance (February 2008)

I posted very early on when this site first started with my son's story of very severe eczema (on the soles of his feet) which took three months to clear, and was related to salicylates. We started Failsafe though because of behavioural problems and had the added bonus of the eczema clearing up completely. He also reacts badly to heavy chemical fumes such as chlorine, ammonia etc (airborne salicylates).

Anyhow, recently he had a major behavioural reaction, I was absolutely sure it was not food related. He was attending Vacation Care at the time. Recently he came home and just happened to mention that one of the ladies had sprayed something on the table he was sitting at, and when he asked what it was, was told 'Don't worry Chris, it won't kill you' (grrrr from me - what if he had been asthmatic?). Anyhow I decided to investigate this, as I could find no food reason for the deterioration of his behaviour.

Turned out that they had been spraying Dettol (or something that smells very similar) on the lunch tables, and regularly spraying air fresheners. (I have since talked to them and they now make sure he is nowhere near when they are spraying stuff around, and he has been fine since).

Anyway, that was the same time he started complaining that his feet were sore - I checked and there was eczema on the soles of his feet again (first time in two years of being Failsafe). Just thought this might be helpful to some out there! It can be more than food! – Jenny, NT

[624] Irritable bowel reactions to Nurofen and salicylates in food (February 2008)

My son began getting diarrhoea and severe stomach pains from tomatoes and other high salicylate foods upon introduction of these foods from 6 months. My GP wasn't concerned about my son having constant foaming revolting smelling poo for three months but I certainly was! Thank you for your wonderful website which helped us to sort out this problem. He has shown similar reactions to salicylates in foods as he has to Nurofen – stomach pain that makes him scream for hours in agony and diarrhoea within 24 hours. This was when he was quite younger and we now know better than to give it to him. – Kate, by email

[618] Mouth ulcers - salicylates (February 2008)

I just had to tell you!!! For the last two months I've had no additives, no kiwi fruit, no oranges, no strawberries, no tomatoes, no juice and have had 7 weeks without a mouth ulcer. Usually I only go about 2 weeks pain free before the skin on the roof of my mouth peels, the tip of my tongue becomes extremely sore together with a badly infected ulcer anywhere in the mouth. Last week I ate 3/4 tomato - within 24 hours I was starting to get an ulcer. Fortunately, this time it hasn't developed into anything nasty - probably because I went back on the strict diet. - Di, Vic

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

Since birth, my son Noah had trouble with sleep it didn't matter what I did or what time of day or night it was, it would always take him at least 2 hours to get to sleep, and then if I put him down in his cot, he would wake 10 minutes later screaming. Then it would take another 2 hours of pacing the dark hallways before he'd doze off again. In the end, I spent the first 12 months of Noah's life sleeping in the rocking chair with him, just so he would sleep. I nearly went crazy with fatigue and confusion. I tried everything I (and everyone around me) could think of.

In the end, I insisted that there was something going on because the times he wasn't crying, I could see that he really had a very social, gentle and loving nature that was at odds with the furious, red screaming insomniac he was the rest of the time! He was breastfed and everything got much worse when I introduced solids. I was advised by a homeopath to stop eating dairy and give him slippery

elm powder to help settle his guts. Everything got so much worse after that. The only thing he could have been reacting to in the slippery elm was salicylates so she put me on a low-salicylate diet. Noah improved but I didn't take it fully seriously I was naughty a lot! I continued drinking coffee and some other things like that. Finally, when Noah was 18 months old, I discovered your website. It changed my entire life, and you will never truly know how indebted I am to you for the work you do. – Alison, Qld

[615] A salicylate-sensitive 15 year-old (February 2008)

I have to thank you for your support and time around 12 years ago with our daughter who is intolerant to salicylates. It took us a long time to work out the problems and then finally we were put on to a paediatric dietician who recommended we read your book Different Kids. I spent the night reading your book crying and laughing the night through and knew that this was my daughter and we had to follow through with the dietary program. We have always been great with fresh food and little use of preservatives in food, once reading this book we realised that it can be good food that can cause our problems. We spent the next 6 months working through all the things that she was intolerant too and living a much happier life. My daughter is now 15 years old and has now become aware of her own intolerances and works her diet out accordingly. It made such a difference to our lives and hers. We could not thank you enough for the inspirations and understanding that we were not the only people with this problem. It still brings a tear to my eye when I remember that night reading your book and a whole new world opened up to us. We have talked about that night to many people who were having problems with children's behaviors. We just could not commend the elimination diet enough, it changed out lives forever. – Kathy by email

[604] 'Awful joint pains' from salicylates in 'loads of fruit and veg' (February 2008)

From the age of 15 I slowly became more and more tired and foggy headed. Gradually I found it impossible to walk to school anymore, and regularly got 12 hours of sleep or more a night. I found out a few years ago that gluten does awful things to my energy levels and brain function, I wish I had known that when I was at school as I'm sure it held me back. In the last two months I was put on a rotation diet where I had to eat a huge variety of fruit and vegetables but could only have each every fifth day. I have NEVER felt so foggy headed, had such blurry vision or had such awful joint pains. All from eating loads of fruit and veg. Consequently, I have high hopes for Failsafe!

[603] Arthritis started after a car accident (February 2008)

My arthritis started after a car accident at the age of 19, also ringing in the ears. The arthritis was to the point where I would soak my hands in hot water each morning to get them ok to work. Both my arthritis and ringing in the ears disappeared totally on failsafe, it was incredible. Four years on, it remains largely stable, is clearly affected by mainly salicylates and sulphites and to a lesser extent amines and MSG. Medication was generally ineffective. - by email, Qld

[601] Bernard's arthritis story (February 2008)

The most remarkable story comes from Bernard in Wollongong. Now active and virtually arthritis-free, Bernard suffered from painful and crippling arthritis for nearly 30 years. In 1994, he was told that if his arthritis was not controlled by daily use of medication, he had 'only four or five years of active life left'. After extensive reading, Bernard opted to try an elimination diet against the recommendation of his specialist, and achieved remarkable results. He warns that arthritis sufferers may need extra time. Bernard wrote:

'If you think that the time span of the food effects on children and their behaviour is long you should try solving the rheumatic and inflammatory disease problem. You are looking at an abstinence time of up to 12 weeks before challenges, symptoms that could take more than a week to identify, and challenges that could take four months or more to complete. I am still improving after eight and a half years on low chemical foods. NOTHING will make me eat the foods I once loved so much.' ...

When Bernard challenged salicylates, on the morning of the eighth day he found his arthritis had returned with such a vengeance that it took him an hour to get out of bed. Artificial food colouring took two days to aggravate his arthritis.

After so many years of needless pain and suffering it is not surprising that Bernard and others like him feel angry about misinformation from experts. When a well-known Australian nutritionist wrote that there is no truth in the rumour that people with arthritis should not eat tomatoes, Bernard added his own comment: 'like hell there isn't!'

You can read about the effects of additives and natural chemicals in fruit and vegetables in Bernard's 'My life with arthritis' story: 'I have suffered with the pain and swelling of arthritis in my arms, hands, neck, back, legs and feet for almost half of my adult life. At times my condition was so bad that I was only able to walk about 50 metres without a rest. The constant pain I suffered was unbearable ... ' on the website: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~btrudget/>.

[600] Arthritis one-liners (February 2008)

- My mother, grandmother and aunt all have arthritis. I've been failsafe for six years and I'm pretty sure if I wasn't failsafe I would have arthritis too, because I can notice my hands get stiff if I break my diet and eat too many salicylates. - by email, NT

[581] Three responses on behavioural effects of Down Syndrome (September 2007)

Diet, sneaky poos and Down Syndrome

I have been reading your website for over a year now, after stumbling across the information on sneaky poos.

About 2 years ago our son who is now 11 and has Down Syndrome, began soiling his pants on a daily basis, rarely at school but often up to six times in the evening. I stumbled across some information about Failsafe on a parenting website and when scanning through the fact sheets, found the information on "sneaky poos" It described our situation perfectly. So after reading lots and lots of

information on the Fed Up site, we, or should I say "I", along with one extremely sceptical husband, set about reducing salicylates in my son's diet to see if it made any difference. His diet was basically a salicylate feast - spaghetti bolognese probably 4 -5 times a week, laden with hidden vegetables (mostly zucchini) and followed by a bowl of either grapes, strawberries or cherry tomatoes (that was lunch), peanut butter on toast for breakfast, dinners included tacos, lasagne with hidden high salicylate vegetables, various stir frys with worcestershire, soy, tomato, oyster sauce etc. He was also hugely into fruit salad. As I'm sure you've heard over and over, I thought we were providing him with a really healthy diet and couldn't understand why he would be unwell all the time.

Anyway we took the plunge, and within maybe three days the soiling had ceased and there were no more stomach aches. I was pleased with the results, however my husband still believed it was another of my harebrained ideas until I tested the salicylates about a month later with a huge fruit salad. My son scoffed a bowl after dinner and another for breakfast the following day. And by lunch time the next day we were back to square one. From that day on my husband has been as vigilant as I am. I must admit, I missed all the summer fruits last season, but only having one pair of undies in the wash each day is worth it.

After going low salicylate and cutting out other nasties, we also noticed a definite behavioural improvement in our son. One thing in particular was his change in motivation, especially getting ready for school. Before the diet, I had a daily struggle with him to get dressed, as if he had the choice, he would stay home every day. After getting strict with his food, he started to just take his clothes from me and say "thanks mum" and next thing he would be dressed.

On the strict diet, he seems to be so much more agreeable and able to be redirected or reasoned with. He used to lose his temper regularly especially with our older son. Now, instead of losing his temper, he will ask calmly for help - like to find a DVD or figure out which remote he needed to change channels. His school teachers have commented on how well he concentrates this year, they were unaware that we had made any changes to his diet. The teachers have also commented that he no longer acts the fool to gain attention, and is much happier to sit and do school work, and be like everyone else.

I have also discovered that he is intolerant of MSG. He used to be addicted to corn chips, we cut those out early on in our failsafe journey. When he later ate other flavoured chips I noticed every time he had them he would cough continually for several minutes. At first I thought he was choking on the chips, as he sometimes has trouble swallowing but then it clicked - it was basically MSG causing an asthma attack.

The low salicylate diet has been a life saver for us with our son. I am a huge fan of failsafe!!! - by email

"Low salicylate diet for DS"

I have a friend who is into failsafe also, she has a 2-year-old with Down Syndrome on a low salicylate diet. Behaviour can be a definite challenge when it comes to DS and I'm sure most families never suspect food intolerance as a contributing factor. - by email

[578] Tics related to salicylates in summer fruits (September 2007)

My son very suddenly developed mild facial (rapid blinking eye and lip biting) and vocal tics (sounds like a quiet grunt or throat clearing sound) at a time when I think his hyper/silly behaviour and other food intolerance symptoms escalated, probably in response to his increased consumption of summer fruits, salads and juices. Other symptoms included: loud voice, bed wetting, sinusitis, teeth grinding. All of his favourite foods were high in salicylates: strawberries, apricots, rockmelon, tomato, cucumber, capsicum, broccoli, vegemite, spag bol, apple juice etc. His diet contained few foods with colourings, flavourings and preservatives as I've always tried to encourage "healthy" foods which he has been very willing to eat.

We noticed some improvement (in behaviour, bed wetting, teeth grinding but not tics) over a week just by changing fruits to pears and bananas, stopping vegemite and tomatoes and switching to low sal veges and Bakers Delight bread. We visited a dietitian and Joe (not his real name) started on the elimination diet. He had a very obvious reaction to sals - hyper like I've never seen him within about 4 hours of starting the challenge. I wouldn't have believed it but my parents witnessed the reaction too! When they visited, he was his usual self, undertaking some quiet activities requiring concentration (jigsaw puzzles, colouring etc), chatting and on his (usual) best behaviour. Within about an hour and half of their arrival he changed into this wild, racing, hyper thing heart racing, unable to stand still, almost a "mad" look in his eyes, silly silly silly etc...the worst of it finished within about two hours and he basically collapsed exhausted and couldn't even stay up to wait for dinner guests that he had been looking forward to seeing. Very strange but so similar to the stories I've read on your web site.

We didn't manage any other challenges before Christmas - felt it too unfair to restrict his diet so severely during the holidays, although I did continue to restrict sals and he doesn't eat many processed, flavoured or coloured foods anyway. We continued along on this basis, watching his sals intake over a day and over a week, and the tic went completely. His behaviour was much more predictable and stable and very much like the boy I know. He is still bed wetting although I am convinced it is worse when he has had sals (e.g. salad) in his dinner and this seems to be improving, particularly since we have been focussing consistently on his sals intake. Teeth grinding and sinusitis very improved. So I am absolutely committed to continuing our new approach to Joe's diet as we really have seen some big improvements. - by emails over a period of 3 months

[575] Vocal tics, word and phrase repetition due to salicylates and additives (September 2007)

When Chris was born he was a big, boofy boy. For the first six month of his life he was a placid, calm, happy child. At six months, he changed to being very, very active, fidgety and demanding. Looking back at that time, three things changed – he started long daycare, solids and formula. I also remember very clearly that his face changed as big dark circles and creases formed under his eyes. He was labelled 'naughty, disruptive, hyperactive and violent' by daycare when he was only 10 months old. He was walking at that stage and continued to escape from the childproof room, or to snatch toys from non-mobile babies.

Since that time he has been variously diagnosed by health professionals as having Tourette's Syndrome, the hyperactive type of ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and others. Whatever the term, the symptoms are the same, including unmanageable behaviour, poor impulse control, loud voice, vocal tics, word and phrase repetition and lack of empathy.

Coupled with the behaviour has also been a range of other medical problems including croup, asthma, headaches and stomach aches, unexplained temperatures and eczema. Chris also suffers from glue ear and for the last four years has had grommets inserted every winter to enable him to hear clearly. (As I know now, these are all indicative of food intolerance.)

Last year I took Chris to a paediatrician, looking for a solution to his constant illness rather than his behaviour. The doctor took one look at him – he was making duck noises and running in circles around the waiting room – and diagnosed food intolerances.

We went home with a complex list of foods to avoid. Although his health improved, his behaviour seemed to become worse, as it always has in summer. Just before Christmas, I found the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's elimination diet for food intolerance. This diet was stricter but far more logical than the one we were using. It worked by identifying the chemicals that people react to, then the foods that contain them. Interestingly, the research showed that most people with food intolerance react to the salicylates in fruit. I had been loading Chris up with cherries and nectarines in term 4. No wonder his teacher was ready to send him to Alcatraz late last year.

I switched the family to the RPAH elimination diet during the holidays. Gradually, as we removed foods from the diet and found acceptable replacements, Chris' behaviour improved. Living with him became easier, there were less sibling fights, and when he did misbehave it was easy to use normal parenting techniques to modify behaviour – something that had never worked before.

By the end of the summer holidays, I finally had a calm, reasonable, sensitive child, who was able to play at other children's places without causing mayhem, would look at people when talking, and would allow other people to talk without interrupting. Amazingly, Chris was keen to stick to the diet, having realised how good he felt.

First day back at school and I had lots of positive comments about how calm or grown-up Christopher seemed. A good start to the year. However, as I write this, I am back to having a child who runs around making chicken noises, uses a loud voice, is prone to crying and is violent and aggressive. What happened? He got to school and started to cheat. He ate chocolate cake, m&m's, muesli bars and lollies. For him, even the smallest amount results in a reaction. It is like being on a trip – he can't control his behaviour, and trying to discipline him has no effect.

So what do I need, or more importantly, what does Chris need? He needs the support of the school community to assist him to stay on his diet – he needs recognition for the fact that he does suffer from food intolerances – he desperately wants to feel in control of his life, and he likes feeling calm and relaxed, so please, please, please don't feed my child, or encourage him to cheat. - by email, Sydney

[571] Why asthmatics need to know about salicylates: An interview with Matt's mother (August 2007)

How long have you been failsafe?

My 8 year old son Matt is a severe asthmatic who has been on the diet for almost a year. We of course have our good days and bad days in making him stick to it, but regardless of that he has done so well and has not had to go to hospital since he has been on the diet, and for a child who has been hospitalized multiple times every year since he was 6 months old this is quite an achievement.

What made you decide to try diet?

I love my children and as a mother I could not continue to blindly pump drugs into Matt every morning, night and during the day, it made me feel sick and I couldn't see that it was actually making an awful lot of difference to his asthma, in fact it seemed to be getting worse. Just before we started the elimination diet Ventolin seemed to have no effect on Matt at all, only prednisolone seemed to alleviate an attack, which as you can imagine frightened the hell out of me. The doctors all said the same things, either give it to him or he could die.

How quickly did the diet kick in?

Amazingly, within a few days. We could not believe how quickly. I remember Matt had been 'trying' to play basketball, we would give him two puffs of ventolin before the game as the doctor had instructed and then the poor thing would try in vain to run up and down the court, but he really didn't want to play and used to ask to be 'subbed' off. The first week of the diet he had a game on the Thursday, so rather than pre-puff, I asked if he needed a puff - he said no - and went out on the court. I sat there nervously with his puffer in my hand at the ready, and off he went - running up and down the court, he was only subbed off when the coach did the normal process of taking equal turns between the players. He came off at the end with a bright red face, sweaty head and a big smile - and a noticeably absent wheeze. I could not believe it - that was when I knew this was going to work.

Which food chemicals affect Matt's asthma (e.g. sulphites, salicylates, benzoates, colours?)

Artificial red colours seem to have the most dramatic effect. Salicylates definitely, although salicylates by themselves e.g. apples, tend to creep up on him, taking a few days and even then the reaction seems milder than artificial colours. Sulphites definitely. Amines do not seem to present the same level of problem, but I am extremely cautious with them also. Have you done challenges or did you work it out from mistakes?

I am very loathe to do challenges, we tend to learn from his or my mistakes. The results are so obvious, usually that night he and I are up all night with his terrible croupy cough, he becomes unreasonable, eczema flairs up, his feet crack and bleed. There is no mistaking it when it happens, and I can't bring myself to deliberately create the situation. The only real trial I have done is with fruit because it is what he misses the most, golden delicious apples for three days, third day severe

asthma attack, cracked feet - lasted 3 days. Bananas no apparent problem. Half a mango - within hours agitated, croupy cough leading to an attack that night, but gone within a couple of days.

What happens when he breaks his diet?

It depends on what he eats. Sometimes it kind of creeps up on me that he seems to be a bit wheezy, but nothing dramatic happens, which concerns me because I think maybe the 'build up factor' is occurring, so I put him back on the elimination diet and start again (we are doing this at the moment, because I have found out that he has been 'sharing' lunch at school and also put in a tuck order without me knowing!) I have reviewed his lunch box and was able to buy your cookbook, so now he is getting enough interesting things and variety so he feels that he is not missing out!

Sometimes it is so painfully obvious that he has eaten something, he just comes home and starts coughing. This happened before Christmas with those rotten candy canes that all the kids give at school - Christmas is a nightmare for me and Matt, he has to say no to things he loves and I have to be the 'lolly detective' to make sure he survives! He came home one day from school and was clearly having an attack, in addition to all of the horrible behavioural issues that accompany such food, I just said point blank - what on earth have you had at school? - and of course it had been a candy cane. School presents the biggest challenge on this diet.

What kinds of foods is he most likely to eat when he breaks his diet?

It depends, lollies, chocolates - things he sees all of the other kids having that he can't. When he did his 'secret' tuck order it was a ham and cheese sandwich and a strawberry milk. Funnily enough most people would think this was quite a 'healthy' lunch!! That night it meant a serious asthma attack for him, and all types of horrible behavior!

Has he been able to reduce medication?

He hasn't needed steroids since he started the diet 12 months ago and over summer he went for three months without any Ventolin. He really only has it now if he is having an attack usually because we have made a mistake or he has had something at school that he shouldn't have. After the ham sandwich and strawberry milk incident he had one dose of two puffs per night for a week, prior to that it had probably been about two months since he had a puff.

How about exercise?

Matt is very active, he plays basketball and football and swims four nights a week in a squad team.

Has Matt's doctor been supportive of diet?

No, I gave up discussing much of anything with the gp/specialist some time ago. Their answer has always been puff at all costs, nothing else will work, his asthma is totally unrelated to diet.

Do you have an asthma plan drawn up with your doctor for Matt?

We do have for school, but it is pretty standard stuff and says he should be puffed twice before any physical activity. He no longer needs and because of his age now the school more or less leave it up to him unless there was an emergency.

Do you measure peak flow readings? if so, do you have any examples of what certain foods do to Matt' readings?

No, we have never measured peak flow - the doctor has never suggested it.

Did you join the failsafeasthma group and if so has it been helpful?

I just joined - so will let you know.

Did you see a dietitian about the diet?

I met with the dietitian you recommended - she was fantastic, gave me some really good tips and excellent guidance. Other than a couple of lunch box modifications she thought we were very much on the right track.

Any other comments?

I would love to see an action group in schools - school lunch is the hardest part of this diet. I would love to be able to refer the school to some committee etc that are educating the educators.

Also, I need to mention something else in relation to Matt's school work. Mid last year Matt's teacher told us that she thought he would have to repeat the year, due to his inability to focus and complete work, also his reading and writing were below standard for his age. She couldn't understand what the problem was, as he is obviously an intelligent boy, however nothing she did was working. We started the diet in the school holidays a few weeks later. We had a parent teacher interview at the end of the following term. The teacher told us that she couldn't believe the difference in Matt, and wanted to know what we had done as the change was quite profound. He was now able to focus and when he couldn't he actually removed himself and asked her if he could go to a quiet place to concentrate!! His reading, writing, completion of tasks, virtually everything had improved out of sight. So much so that she said there was absolutely no need to hold him back a year.

I can tell if Matt or I have made a mistake - as much by his behaviour as his coughing.

Once again THANK YOU so much for continuing this wonderful work - it has changed our lives.

[565] One-liners (May 2007)

- Salicylates make me wired, pee a lot and cause dark circles under my eyes; amines make me very angry and I wake up with palpitations and sweats – email, USA.

[563] IBS: colostomy for 11-month-old baby (May 2007)

... Four months had passed and we were increasingly worried for our daughter who still suffered from the terrible nappy rash and constant visible straining when using her bowel (most unusual in a baby) and was generally unsettled. By now we had tried cows' formula (which resulted in vomiting) and soy formula (which resulted in diarrhea) and we had also noticed that with fruits the problem was worse. Things didn't improve and after many calls and visits to our GP and Paediatrician we decided to see another Paediatrician.

The next Paediatrician suggested we trial a prescribed formula for 2 weeks. This resulted in violent vomiting and trip back to him whereby an ultrasound was performed and we were informed that she in fact had chronic constipation, with a large mass in her colon. Our daughter was now 11 months-old and had to have immediate surgery to remove the mass which resulted in her having a colostomy for 3 months.

We were assured by the Paediatric Surgeon that in fact her problems were not food related and that she was born with an 'anorectal anomaly' and that all would be ok once the colostomy was reversed. To our disappointment as soon as the colostomy was reversed we went straight back to the problems of severe nappy rash and excoriation on her full diet. Our daughter at 15 months was then seen by a Professor at the hospital who diagnosed disaccharidase deficiency (sucrose intolerance) to be the cause of the excoriation and unsettled behaviour; not the case.

Somehow eventually after breaking down many times and a visit again to our GP's rooms in desperation we were finally sent with a referral to the RPA Allergy Clinic (daughter now 21months old). This was like a dream come true, they did a skin prick test for allergies; which showed no positive reactions (as suspected it would by the clinic Paediatrician). We were then talked through food intolerances and naturally occurring chemicals in foods which caused intolerances in some people! The evidence was there in front of us and we couldn't believe it we finally had answers. Our daughter is now a healthy 6.5 year old, on a low salicylate and mainly low chemical diet who continues to thrive and hasn't looked back. We do trial new foods occasionally and are starting to add small amounts of moderate salicylates to her diet and some dairy (her main drink is now rice milk). We know straight away if she has overloaded as this results in usually loose motions or not being able to control her motions. For us the evidence is overwhelming and we are just very grateful we have our daughter and we can now give her answers and solutions so that she continues to enjoy good health and happiness. - by email. (fullstory in Reader Stories pdf)

[561] Nurofen mistake (May 2007)

Thank you for helping us to get back the children we were meant to have. We have been failsafeing for about 2 1/2 months mainly for our 4 year old daughter who was defiant, argumentative, oppositional, angry, sometimes violent, sometimes hyperactive, deliberately annoying, and would be awake for 2 - 4 hours after bedtime before falling asleep. The contradiction being that she could also be charming, loving, insightful, enjoyable, happy, playful, caring, enjoy an activity (craft, colouring, building etc) for extended times, clever, calm and inquisitive.

About two years ago we learned about colours and preservatives (from "The Chemical Maze") and pretty much took them out - apart from occasional treats – with good results and we had no idea there was so much more to the food chemical story. I never would have considered fruit etc, I just thought I somehow had to be doing a bad job at disciplining my child and that must be why she is still the way she is. While reading Fed up with ADHD my hopes were ignited for a better life for all of us as I worked up the courage to go failsafe and give this a try. It was a daunting thought with a new baby as well but we really had no choice as far as I could see so we started! Amongst the initial flurry of the first few weeks the results were incredible as we saw emerge this delightful child and hardly any of the pre-diet behaviour. I now feel it is our way of life and I am learning to manage the work load of the constant cooking, baking and planning around food. My once skeptical husband is a beautiful support and really helps out with the kids and the washing so I can keep up with the food etc. We have seen some remarkable changes but there are still some things that concern me though.

After 3 weeks on elimination, our first challenge was salicylates and we had a severe day 3 or 4 reaction, stopped on day 5 and I think we were just starting to come good after about 6 days from stopping when we had a friend's birthday party the next day. We had been so strict, everything to the letter and the girls' attitudes toward the diet was so amazing that we thought we'd have a day off and give them a "treat". The party food wasn't as bad as it could've been. A lot of home cooking. But they did have some lollies, fruit and chocolate. The girls couldn't believe it after about 5 weeks on the diet! Anyway, behaviour started that evening and it was pretty foul for about three weeks. We also made the mistake of giving her Nurofen for a sore throat in the week following the party but apart from that we were back to 100% failsafe the day after the party. So after about 3 weeks of reaction type behaviour she started to become progressively better but still with some D.F.Asleep (down to 1-2 hours) and still to many times of defiance and aggression etc. amongst the good behaviour. We are now 4.5 weeks after the party and 5.5 weeks after the end of our salicylate challenge and I feel like we are not yet back to how it was in the first three weeks. – from a country failsafer [this family is now doing well]. Their problems included daily Sakata rice crackers, accidental exposure to lawn fertiliser, and Nurofen. Although Nurofen doesn't contain salicylates, most salicylate sensitive people have cross sensitivity to it and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as naproxen and diclofenac. You can regard one dose of aspirin or Nurofen as the equivalent of a week's salicylate food challenge, ref: Jenkins C and others, Systematic review of prevalence of aspirin induced asthma and its implications for clinical practice, BMJ. 2004;328(7437):434. For more possible reasons for diet not working, see [Checklist of Common Mistakes](#)

[560] Reaction to aspirin (May 2007)

Our 13-year-old daughter suffers extreme sensitivity to salicylates and our 12-year-old son suffers mildly (or so I thought). During Easter we had relatives visit and I had gone for a walk with the younger children. My son had a growing headache when I left, and our care for that is a warm carob and lying down in a quiet room. While I was gone he asked if his aunty had anything for a headache. (Incredibly irresponsibly!) she gave him an aspirin. By the time I returned from my half hour walk he had developed severe swelling of the eyes, upper lip, ear lobes and generally puffiness of his face; also urticaria over his whole body centred on his neck and under his jaw line. At first I didn't know about the aspirin. After much questioning, research and deliberation I came to the conclusion that it could only have been the aspirin. He became very agitated, very frightened, and very unlike his usual self. It took over 48 hours for all the symptoms to disappear. Needless to say, my children have never been given aspirin before, and it will never be allowed in my house again. – by email, see [Salicylates factsheet](#) for the aspirin-salicylate connection.

[559] 'Ultra-healthy' diet led to asthma and debilitating health issues (May 2007)

My mother and I have known for years that we are allergic to aspirin. We both react with ringing in the ears, nausea, vertigo, lethargy, and I even lost consciousness once. I avoid salicylates in cosmetics and toiletries at all costs, but my health has steadily declined (I am 24). My mother and I both have had doctors mystified for years with strange and debilitating health issues. They told my mother oh you have lupus, no you don't, yes you do, no ... so on and so on. Now they have decided that we both have fibromyalgia. None of my doctors have ever mentioned that salicylates are in foods. After coming across this information I realised that almost every diet change recommended to me by the doctors has caused my salicylate intake to be astronomical. It's no wonder I've been in and out of emergency rooms.

Everyone made fun of me calling me a "health nut" because of the supposedly ultra-healthy diet I was on. I was trying to follow the USDA guidelines and eating lots of fruits and vegetables - especially citrus, broccoli, and spinach. The heart healthy recommendations include lots of processed tomato products and using as many different herbs as possible (to give flavor instead of salt). I also was trying to eat as many "naturally sweetened" things as possible. I was eating a lot of fresh oat granola, but it was loaded with honey, almonds, and pretty much anything that comes up high in the sals. I also was using olive oil for cooking, salad dressing, and with herbs instead of butter on bread.

It's no wonder that I was getting worse. I was having so many migraines that I only had about two days a month that I could function without excruciating pain in my head, I had chronic tendonitis, chronic fatigue, if I ever did get to sleep I felt more tired when I woke up than before I slept and I was still gaining weight. Now that I am on the right track I have only had two migraines in two months, and I have only had a tendon problem one day. I was diagnosed with adult onset asthma and was using an inhaler every day and now I only have to use it when I get exposed to salicylates. My mother and I have both been improving so drastically that everyone is asking us what is going on. – from the USA

[557] "Giving up the victim role": a story of salicylate intolerance (May 2007)

I have been so inspired by the stories of others that I felt the desire to share my "salicylate intolerance discovery" story. I had been sick for many years and when I think about it probably since birth. Back in those days not many topical products had herbals in them so my salicylate intake was confined to food and aspirin products. And my symptoms were mainly digestive, brain fog, and numerous bouts with asthma. When I grew up and flew the coop things became increasingly worse. For years I have been in and out of the doctor's office (I am in the military health care system) and all tests ran negative, of course. And so the multiple diagnoses began - arthritis, mental illness, fibromyalgia and so on. A few years ago one of my co-workers disclosed to me that she had fibro and referred me to the guai-support website. I knew that it would be hard to convince the military doctors to put me on the Guaifenesin treatment so I decided that I would pay for it out of my pocket if it would give me back my quality of life.

On any given day I was experiencing 10-15 symptoms daily and was hardly functioning - it was very, very difficult. There were days I could not walk and my husband had to carry me to the bathroom. Just lying in bed was painful - the good days were marked with a raging fever, flu-like feelings, and a ringing headache. I did get to a point where I got used to the pain and learned to live with it - I really had no other choice - live with it or kill myself.

For some reason I knew deep inside that I didn't have fibro, it didn't seem right. But I reasoned what do I have to lose and on a long holiday weekend I set upon the closet to remove all topical sal-full products from my life. Within a week I felt incredible. When I talked to my co-worker she said maybe I didn't have fibro at all but a sensitivity to salicylates I was quite stunned. A few weeks had passed and I felt better and better but I still had some digestive tract symptoms so I went back to the guai-support site and re-read the information and one line jumped out at me - that you did not have to worry about salicylate in food as the body would break it down and it would not interfere with the guaifenesin. That led to another Google search and to other sites. I never had to beg the doctors to put me on the guaifenesin protocol as removing sal-full products and food from my life relieved all of my symptoms (listed below).

But there was still a period of "struggle" for me. I am a gardener by hobby and trade so I had to learn to cover up my body and wear gloves to eliminate contacting plant salicylates. I also have been growing and eating my own food for years. That was the hardest part and I went through the denial stage for while - abusing my body with foods I knew I could not tolerate. How do you grow vine ripened tomatoes and perfumy exotic melons and not eat them?! The mind would say - oh come on a few bites won't matter - but it really did matter! So I finally decided to quit seeing my "problem" through the eyes of a victim (poor me, why me? why am I being punished?) and changed my point of view to a position of personal power. What a huge difference. So I can't eat some food and wash my hair in botanical goodness - so what. When I totally eliminated the foods/products that caused me trouble I felt so great that I could not believe that I could deal with that much pain. And I never want to feel that pain ever again!

The nice thing about giving up the victim role is I could reclaim that negative energy and put it towards something else - last year I bought myself a motorcycle and began riding - something I had been wanting to do for years (I rode trail bikes as a kid and loved it) but couldn't do when I was ill. Regaining my quality of life and being able to work, exercise and play again (and I am quite sure my husband is happy that sex no longer hurts) is worth giving up "bad" foods.

For all you new to this I know it can seem just miserable - take it one day at a time, be gentle and forgiving with yourself, and know that life can be rewarding and fun without some pleasures of food, drink, and beauty products. Wishing you good health - by email (with permission from another group)

Mind, emotion and behaviour symptoms: accident prone • anxiety • anger for no apparent reason • blankness • brain fogging • clumsiness • confusion • depression • detached/unreal feeling • difficulty waking up/getting out of bed (due to lack of sleep and aching muscles) • disorientation • dyslexia • hearing without comprehension • inability to think clearly • indifference • irritability • memory loss • mental exhaustion • mood swings • panic attacks • poor concentration & memory reading • restlessness • slow to process information • slurred speech • suicidal feelings

Physical symptoms: abdominal pains (thought I might have IBS) • acne • asthma & wheezing, tightness of chest • athlete's foot • bad breath • bloating (lost three dress sizes when I gave up the sals) • blurred vision • breast pain • constipation • crawling/burning sensation on skin • diarrhea • insomnia • itching • joint pain, stiffness & swelling • fatigue & lethargy (thought I might have CFS) • menstrual problems, pre-menstrual pain • metallic taste • migraines • mouth ulcers • muscles - aching, weakness, tremors & cramps nausea palpitations & racing pulse • poor balance • rashes • difficulty in swallowing • dizziness • eczema • excessive thirst • feeling drained • flushes - both hot & cold • frequent need to urinate • headaches • restless legs • sensitivity to light & noise • sleep disturbances • sore, itching, puffy, burning eyes, stiff neck • temperature fluctuations • ringing ears • weight problems.

[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]

[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

[474] One-liners (November 2006)

- We solved my father-in-law's severe eczema after visiting your website. He was using Wintergreen and Deep Heat to relieve joint pain symptoms and dermatologist couldn't cure his problem at all. Since following the low salicylate diet, he is 100%. He can not believe that the stiffness, aching joints and bad eczema have all disappeared.
- You were right about salicylates! My six year old son has improved so much more now that we are avoiding them.

[453] One liners (August 2006)

Our dietician has already cleared one thing up for me - why I often find my throat closing up when eating peppermints. I had no idea that it would be a salicylate issue.

[446] The 12 days of salicylates (August 2006)

This is the diary of a salicylate food challenge with a five year old boy who suffered from two different kinds of effects, behaviour and rash. Note that effects can be delayed, build up slowly and fluctuate. Behavioural reactions are likely to occur and resolve more quickly than rash. Behavioural symptoms can depend on what is happening around the child. Food chemicals can cause irritability resulting in tantrums when children don't get their own way and good behaviour when they do.

Day 1 – No reaction

Day 2 - Tantrum, kicking, punching (wanted more peppermints)

Day 3 - Punched a peer's arm at kindy

Day 4 - Itchy rash appeared on inside of elbow

Day 5 - Well behaved

Day 6 - Red blotches and pimples all over lower half of face, tantrum, screaming and hitting me (didn't want photo taken)

Day 7 - More blotchy and spotty, face sore and raw. (End of challenge foods)

Day 8 - Wet bed

Day 9 - Wet bed, sore tummy, sore red anus, constipated

Day10 -Wet bed, kindy complained of very small attention span, loss of concentration.

Day11 - Face clearing, no wet bed, generally seems to be getting better

Day12 - wet bed again.

[431] My daughter gets eczema and asthma from salicylates (July 2006)

When my daughter was two I noticed that her eczema seemed to flare up after I had given her spaghetti one day or two before. I asked my dietitian if it could be tomatoes and she said "yes - it can be salicylates". So I stopped giving her spaghetti and tomatoes thinking this would solve the problem however she still had eczema so I just treated it. When she turned three years old she started getting asthma, about every month and when she had a virus or a cold. My daughter always only drank water or milk but at her Kindy Christmas Party we had to give her some cordial to drink because there wasn't anything else and that night she had asthma. The same thing happened a month later after she had a raspberry fruit drink. My doctor just told me how to treat the asthma so I went to my dietitian. She prescribed vitamin supplements and took my daughter off dairy which reduced the frequency and severity of the asthma but made the eczema worse. It took a couple of months for me to realize that I was mixing the vitamin powder in orange juice, then the dietitian gave me a list of all the foods that contained salicylates so I could avoid them. A few weeks after we started avoiding salicylates, my daughter's skin started clearing up. So you can see the pattern with the tomatoes, fruit juice and orange cordial with real fruit juice – reader by email.

[419] One-liners (May 2006)

- After reading your book I realize that salicylates might be the reason my teenage daughter has had terrible bowel problems for the last few years because she had bad eczema as a kid, got a mighty dose of tinea when she overdosed on grapes last year, and our diet for the past few years has been VERY high in all the very high salicylate foods such as dried fruit (muesli), dates, tomatoes, eggplant, rocket, onions, almonds, avocados, grapes, broccoli - by email.

[397] Stuttering related to preservatives and salicylates (March 2006)

My 9 year old son started stuttering when he was around 4 years old. He seemed to be sensitive to preservatives especially 211 and I have steered clear of this preservative, but a few weeks ago his stuttering came back in full force, around the same time I had apple juice in the house. He is a big juice addict, and thinking back, has always had juice, either straight or diluted. I have always watched out for the preservatives in juice, and bread, but I now think he is intolerant to salicylates as well. I have changed all of his foods to failsafe foods, and his speech is now good. He has calmed down a bit as well.

[390] Mixed depressive disorder with anxiety and obsessive ruminations including self harm due to salicylate sensitivity (March 2006)

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

2 weeks later...

Just wanted to let you know, we are all amazed at our son's improvement over the last two weeks. I have been in contact with the dietitian you recommended, she is lovely and very supportive. We will be starting the "proper" 3 week elimination diet on the weekend after the school camp (couldn't manage that one!) But I wanted to tell you also that even my GP has taken to your book for herself and her family. She is raving about it!

2 months later ...

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

One week later

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

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

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

NSW(vwilder@optusnet.com.au) [and see our new Factsheet HHT and salicylates]

[381] One liners (November 2005)

I am continuing to stick to low sals vegies and I think it has made a big difference for my son's sneaky poos, his stools are now firm and well formed and he has been going to the toilet everyday (finally!)
- failsafer, Vic

[377] I thought we were low salicylate (breastfed baby) (November 2005)

I cried when I read the stories on breastfeeding babies because that's our world since my son was born 16 months ago - screaming and arching his back until sore big farts release all day and night. I thought we were low salicylate (citrus, broccoli, tomato...) but it turns out it's all the things we were eating - grapes, watermelon, spinach - a difference is already obvious since cutting out high salicylates. – Tasmania

[356] One-liners (Nov 2004)

- When I was little I was told to take antihistamines every day for the rest of my life for a persistent itchy throat, but after months of failsafe I have finally worked out that even minute amounts of salicylates are the problem. – WA
- Our son is such a fussy eater that we didn't give him enough salicylates during the salicylate challenge – we concluded he could tolerate moderate to high salicylates and it has taken us months to recognise that he is noticeably better on low salicylates – Vic

[350] Hearing loss and tinnitus from salicylates (Nov 2004)

I've known for 30 years that I am salicylate sensitive since suffering temporary hearing loss - and the top of my head felt numb - after taking one regular full day's dosage of aspirin (8 tablets in 24 hours) prescribed by my doctor. My symptoms cleared up in several days after I stopped the aspirin. But it is only recently that I put two and two together and got four - food salicylates may have played a big role in my steady hearing loss and increasing tinnitus over the years. I discovered this when I started taking noni this year and my hearing loss accelerated, I got terrible tinnitus, and my head felt "funny". Then I discovered noni may be high in salicylates. - by email

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

give me any reference to your work or that of the RPAH diet. Therefore, I thought my child was not a "foodie" (as I call her!) and gave it no further thought. My husband is dead against ADHD medication and basically my daughter got worse over the next six months until I was at breaking point with her behaviour at home, socially, and at school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[327] One-liners (April 2004)

* When I was diagnosed with a salicylate intolerance I found your book incredibly helpful and it stopped the usual 3 or 4 hours of runny nose every day! - reader UK.

[324] Autism and diet at school (2) (April 2004)

About 18 months ago you helped us put our son Ryan (now nearly 5 years old) on the elimination diet, after we had been to RPA for Ryan's hyperactivity, ADHD and autism. Three months later you helped us find a problem with wholegrain wheat and antioxidants that had pulled us undone. Salicylates turned out to be our main problem although antioxidants are a close second, with amines and other additives a problem too.

Our son is now in his second year at special school, where he has made great leaps and bounds. When Ryan started school he was already on the diet. Months later when we'd allowed bananas to become more frequent than one half every second day, his teachers actually came to me and asked was Ryan eating something he shouldn't be. It took us three weeks to figure it out, and cut back on the bananas. Through this incident, they really came to see what we were talking about. Interestingly the school has strongly supported us, always keeping us up to date with what's coming up for 'tasting' in cooking classes, and seeking alternatives for Ryan. I'm very grateful for this! - reader, NSW

[323] Dodgy doctors and salicylates (April 2004)

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

After 10 days there had been no improvement so I sat down and reread your book as well as Friendly Food from RPAH. I found his list had been quite misleading - no talk about cold pressed oils, different rices, raw and roasted cashews, hazelnuts, tamari, additives in margarines etc.

Probably the worst thing has been the twice daily sucking in of eucalyptus oil!! There must be a lot of doctors out there like this who send people off with half-baked lists and advice and consequently end up with very spurious results. Most of the population treat doctors as gods and never question them but, as I have proven on many occasions, they are not infallible and people need to be a lot more aware and questioning. It is has been hard yakka trying to get my son to give up so many different foods and all for nought as now we will need to find somebody who really knows what they are doing and start again.

Had I not had your book, we could have come to the conclusion that the problem is not salicylates, whereas there is a possibility that it is. - by email.

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

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

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

[310] Asthma due to salicylates (December 2003)

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

salicylates but I didn't know that at the time. During that attack she had to go back on her preventer medication as well as Ventolin but she hasn't needed it since. - failsafer, Qld

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

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

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

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

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

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

[287] Dental fillings and migraines (September 2003)

My mother was advised to have all her teeth out because her fillings might be causing her migraines. She doesn't get migraines any more, but I'm not convinced that fillings were the cause. She is eating a lot less salicylates because she avoids tomatoes (the skins get stuck in her false teeth), strawberries (seeds likewise) and apples (too difficult to bite). - by email

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

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

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

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

[265] Reversals during salicylate challenge (June 2003)

We started our salicylate challenge on a Sunday. By Monday afternoon, my son was climbing the furniture more than normal and told me he felt silly. He was very giggly. On Tuesday afternoon he was again climbing the furniture and not responding to me when I talked to him. He was very happy and giggly again and it was actually kind of nice. His writing has improved so much lately, I was astounded when we sat down to do his homework and he started writing badly again. About 75% of his letters were backwards and he couldn't work out how to spell easy words. This is what really shocked me and what will make me avoid salicylates. When he got dressed he even put his clothes on backwards! - failsafer, by email

[262] Stuttering (June 2003)

Our latest mistake was when our son was given a "special treat" of a glass of orange juice by his well meaning grandparents. Aaaaaargh. I have noticed since then his speech has gotten worse, but improves once we give him some bicarb soda (mixed with golden syrup) as an antidote. We noticed his speech worsened when we did the salicylate challenge. The speech problems come into play when he is hyper, which is days 1-2 post salicylate and slowly improves from there. - by email

[228] Severe Aspirin Induced Asthma (January 2003)

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

'Samter's syndrome may be acquired at any time of life although it mainly affects women who are in their 40s and starting menopause. When I was 15, I was given hormones for some female problems and within a week was deathly ill with constant coughing, wheeze, whole body swelling and hives. As my lungs were always filled with liquid they called it 'wet asthma'. It took years to figure out what was wrong with me but when they did, they concluded that the hormones threw me into this by changing my body chemistry.

'I found out that I was allergic to aspirin from an anaphylactic reaction when I was 16. I did not require hospitalization but I was very ill for over a week. My mouth, face and eyes and lips all swelled inside out and I had asthma and hives. For the next 3 years, it was a constant life and death situation, being transported to the hospital too many times to count, unconscious and in respiratory failure. No one, not even the doctors knew what causing the problems as the asthma was so very different from common asthma. During that time, I was put on prednisone on an every other day schedule and had to quit school as the illness was completely out of control.

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

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

'Looking back to when I first was diagnosed with this and after the anaphylactic shock, I was eating a little rice, very few vegetables, no fruits and mostly meat and drinking only water. I was too scared to eat much. That was the first time I was able to come off prednisone for any length of time at all. Then the dietitian said I was anemic and wanted me to vary my diet. So I started eating more fruit and vegetables. It wasn't very long till I was back on all the medications. I didn't connect that the foods I had added back in were the problem because they were listed as low salicylate on the list that I was given.

'For the last 29 years, it has been up and down, just trying to figure it all out, taking medications and trying to stay alive. I would rack my brains trying to figure out where I was going wrong but couldn't get a handle on it. And was having to take more and more prednisone and antihistamines.

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

[215] Autism and diet (October 2002)

My son is 3 ½ and was diagnosed with Autism at 2½. He also presented with almost all of the criteria for the hyperactivity side of ADHD. The diagnosing doctor gave us very little information to go ahead with. By good fortune my husband picked up Sue Dengate's Failsafe Cookbook the weekend after our son was diagnosed, when I was still reeling and had no idea which direction to head in. We went looking for triggers for our sons hyperactive bouts, he was always active, preferring to permanently run rather than walk, and he had no attention span, but sometimes he would just go off, usually for about two days, where he would literally climb the furniture, sitting on top of the bookshelf,

watching TV upside down, while lying on top of it, and he was causing his older sister, not to mention his parents, huge amounts of grief.

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

Our son is a typical limited Autistic eater. We were told that he was eating a good nutritious diet and we shouldn't interfere. After RPAH and Sue's book, we learned that almost everything our son was eating was bad for his intolerances. I'd tried Helgas Rye bread thinking I was avoiding bread preservative 282 - with no idea that vinegar was a problem! He drank lots of diluted apple juice - so I bought the one with no flavourings and thought he would pee out what he didn't need, which he did. I thought it was good that he drank between 2 and 3 litres a day - the chemist told me it wasn't a problem. RPAH told us he was consuming the equivalent of 10 - 12 apples a day and he is salicylate intolerant!!! Since we removed the fruit juice, he doesn't crave it any more and now drinks about 1 litre of water a day - and it was far easier than I could have imagined!

So even with lots of knowledge under my belt and advice from all the so called "experts" before I went to RPAH I still was far off base. Three days on the elimination diet and our son was a changed child. Preschool reports that he now walks instead of runs. As a result he has slowed down enough to take an interest in the activities around him. He has broken the diet a couple of times, so one week in we inadvertently challenged salicylates and colourings, both with obvious results.

The good news is that he is allowed to still eat wheat, pears, and drink diluted pear syrup from tinned pears, and he has adapted beautifully - something I never thought possible.

Our son is still Autistic - it's not a cure - but it has certainly made a difference to his hyperactivity and therefore he is now far more teachable, with a wider interest base, and the ability to pay attention to things better than before. Grandparents who were sceptics of the diet have noticed that he is calmer, and can only attribute it to the diet. He has even started looking at his grandad, for the first time in two years!

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

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

[160] Salicylate sensitivity (June 2002)

My partner is sensitive to salicylates. He has seen a dietician and a team of doctors for his illness, but to be honest we have found 'The Failsafe Cookbook' and your website much more helpful with the salicylate part of the problem. - by email

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

I wrote to you several years ago when I first read your book and put my son, now 10, on your diet. I followed it for approximately a year when I decided that I wanted a professional to confirm what I was doing. So I attended dietician appointments with my son for about 6 months. I would have been better off doing it myself all along. The dietician confirmed that my son had an intolerance to salicylates. Then she proceeded to wean him onto them - every second day. It only took one week for his teacher to come to me on bended knee asking me to return to what I was doing with his diet, and to cut a long story short he was banned from ever attending a school function again. I argued with the school, saying that if he was an epileptic they would understand it was a problem out of his control - bottom line - he is now allowed at school functions and we have had two years incident free, until recently.

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

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

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

2 mths - Chris doesn't settle - he gets worse, screaming and crying all the time all day and night. Regularly passes out from lack of oxygen. We try every colic remedy available - nothing helps. I even try giving him a range of formulas on the doctor's advice - none of these make any difference so after a few days on each I go back to breastfeeding.

2 1/2 mths - we notice Chris has a serious hernia and needs an emergency operation - his stomach is split right across and the muscles are trapping the arteries going to the testes - we hope no permanent damage is done - staff and doctors tell me it was probably caused as a result of the bad colic he has and him pushing in pain all the time. They assure me he will be a lot better when his stomach heals and should settle down - a bit of a contradiction but I go home and hope.

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

I ring my doctor in desperation. I am afraid I might hurt Chris if I don't get some sleep soon and get him sorted out. My doctor admits us to hospital. The staff take over Chris and I get to sleep. Staff are amazed at the amount Chris screams - at first they think it is just because he is away from me and home but I assure them he is the same at home. His crying continues non stop even after being in hospital over a week and in my arms a lot of the time. The doctor suggests we try the elimination diet. We see our local dietitian. I start the diet. The dietitian suggests we don't give Chris any solids for a while. I read somewhere that he shouldn't get them until he is about 7 to 8 months old.

4 1/2 mths Chris is getting a lot better. He isn't screaming near as much though is still crying a fair bit. We really notice it when I eat anything on the no go list - we have to cope with his screaming within 24 hours. Chris's diarrhea is nowhere near as constant. He is now sleeping for 4 to 5 hour blocks at night and settling quickly after a feed and change. His body language now shows more tiredness rather than pain symptoms when he is upset. His reflux has disappeared.

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

7 1/2 mths We start using management strategies to try to get Chris to sleep during the day. Our doctor thinks he can't sleep as he doesn't know how and is not in the habit. We succeed after a week and now Chris is sleeping for 2 hours in the morning and afternoon. We also introduce some solid foods. Chris's crying and grizzling improves hugely. He is now actually appearing to be really happy sometimes.

12 mths Chris weans himself and has been on Neocate ever since - other formulas such as soy cause instant unpleasant reactions - back to no sleep and crying a lot.

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

19 mths Chris is now fantastic. We are really enjoying him. He reacts to all the things avoided on the elimination diet still so it is not much fun when we try challenges. We really pay for it - he reacts differently with different chemicals. Salicylates, preservatives and amines make him scream in pain and he gets diarrhea. Preservative 282 in bread is by far the worst - within 3 hours Chris is screaming in agony and has chronic diarrhea. When I was breastfeeding and ate 282 he would react within 12 hours. Colours make him really hyperactive, uncontrollable and he ends up getting hurt. - Dani, WA

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

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

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

Being a 30 something Mum, I also was fully aware of what sort of Mum I wanted to be. I had clear visions of being a compassionate Mum; this entailed no spanking, no yelling, but rather validating feelings, finding alternatives whereby both of us would be happy, and in the worst scenario just accepting that my child and I would not always agree, but I would still respect this difference rather than fight it. My son's temperament, however, tested me to the core and I failed often in living my maternal visions. Yes, I have yelled at my son, yes I have spanked him (to date, three times - he is 2.5 years old and each time I think about it, I do cringe with disappointment with the evidence of my weaknesses). My son, from an early age was high need and wanted full on hands on care, was

constantly on the breast, slow to unwind, wanted in-your-face attention, constantly in my arms. In a nutshell I found him draining, and highly strung. I remember when he was only five months old, having this real desire just to throw him across the room and the reality of my feelings shocked me to my core. I am by nature sensitive to other people's feelings, gentle, gracious, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[137] Unsettled breastfed baby (December 2001)

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

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

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

[128] Food-induced tonsillitis (November 2001)

"I just wanted to say "thanks" on behalf of my family. My wife discovered our daughter's salicylate intolerance after serendipitously finding and buying Fed Up 3 years ago. It's not easy to stick to the diet, as you will know, but it's definitely worth it for the difference. If only some of our friends and family had the willpower required.

A couple of weeks ago, she transcribed the favourite recipes out of the book, to have as a handy carry-anywhere reference, also to give to the family so they could cater for our daughter if need be. Then ... we found your latest book. She has hardly put it down in the last 24 hours, except to sleep and eat, and now, to study your website! Yours are probably the two most important books in our house.

A curiosity for us was our daughter's apparent intolerance to garlic oil capsules. She was taking them for a year or so, to supplement her limited diet, and in that time, suffered repeated attacks of tonsillitis, to the extent that the ENT surgeon had scheduled her for surgery. Then we stopped the garlic supplement, and the tonsillitis disappeared. That was 18 months ago and she's been fine since. Very odd.

Keep up the good work. Many people worry about the possible problems associated with GM foods but are happy to let their kids drink something that looks like anti-freeze; taking all the junk out of what we eat would be a better first step in the right direction. Tim Tams? You can keep 'em!"

- father, by email

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

Around February of 2000 I was searching on the internet for some clues to my life long digestive problems, when I came across the food allergy section on the About.com website. The featured food allergy topic happened to be salicylates ... just out of curiosity, and for the heck of it, I clicked on the link, and started to read about it ... I first off read the list of common symptoms. As I read it the list was all to familiar to me ... I answered Yes to every symptom. Needless to say, I started to follow a salicylate free diet. To say I felt better would have been the understatement of a new millenium..... ALL of my life I have suffered from Very frequent urination, constipation, stomach bloating, short temper, irritability, inability to concentrate, memory problems, severe acne, dry skin (especially on my hands and feet), those restless legs, and more ...<sigh>... The worst of it for me though was the constant urination, and constipation which led to a lot of gas ... Thank you so much for your work, and your book. Both have changed my life forever. I am finally free of a problem which has literally ruined my life. In case you're wondering, I'm 37 years old ... And yes, 36 years is WAY too long to suffer with this health problem. Sometimes I don't know how I made it this long with my sanity intact. - from the USA

[122] Restless Legs Syndrome (August 2001)

Restless Legs Syndrome was absolutely driving me crazy. If I forced my legs to be still, they would then jerk with even greater intensity. While I was watching TV, my legs were constantly swinging, because of this urge to move them. They were not itchy - it was just like there was something under the skin driving me crazy. Apparently most sufferers go on to become alcoholics (ref: The Bulletin 2000) which I can understand. American websites about RLS basically fall back onto all sorts of medication, which I do not want to take. Within two weeks of trying the elimination diet, I was able to sit still at night, AND get into bed without fear of tossing and turning all night because of this urge

to move my legs. I now know the foods I should not touch - salicylates and additives ... when I eat any of these forbidden foods there is a definite reaction. – NSW

[114] Paresthesia (numbness) (August 2001)

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

[108] Salicylates from the beginning (August 2001)

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

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

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

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

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

"My friend has followed your diet and had only one small reaction (and she admits to "cheating" some that day) in the last 11 months. Before that, she was speeding to the hospital in an ambulance about every 10 -14 days. Now she has not done that in nearly a whole year - THANKS to your book and food lists. She has also reduced the antihistamines that she takes by more than half ... Her own allergy doctor is very impressed with her current health and has sent for "Fed Up" also. It seems weird that she has had to find her own help and that doctors seem to have little knowledge of her allergy to natural aspirin. Thanks again for your help. She is my close friend and lives alone but now I don't fear for her safety because the life threatening reactions have disappeared. Her overall health

and energy levels have greatly increased. Without your website, current correct information, and books, coping was so difficult". - reader's friend, USA

[089] I had to laugh - "not affected by foods"! (October 2000)

"You may be pleased to know that I presented your book "Fed Up" to my ADD support group and gave them a complete run down about the diet. ... I had to laugh to myself when one mum stated categorically that her son (extremely hyperactive) "is not affected by foods". Yes, I once thought that about my son, only to find how very salicylate sensitive he is!!" - reader, email

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

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

[062] Drew's story - sleeping, colic, ear infections, then behaviour problems at school (July 2000)

My son, Drew, was always a challenge. He was a difficult baby. I remember a paediatrician smiling at me one day and saying "oh he's advanced". I was quite pleased until I realized this meant "hyperactive"!

He never slept, had colic and frequent ear infections. He also had child hood allergies. At 6 months my milk dried up (probably stress related) so I decided to put him on a bottle and was advised to try Nan formula. He was never a good feeder and it took me hours to get him to take to the bottle. There was no help from the infant nurse unless I wanted to continue breast-feeding. I was basically told I was on my own. Finally, success, he drank from the bottle. I put him down for a snooze (wistful thinking really). About 10 minutes later he was up crying and covered head to toe with hives. He had reacted to the formula!! I could go on but I suspect you can fill in the blanks about his early childhood.

Anyway, trouble really started half way through pre-school. He was constantly in trouble and his teacher held concerns about his ability to cope with school. I decided at this point to go for the head in the sand approach, you know, ignore it and it will go away. Well, that didn't last long. I spent most of his kindergarten year watching my beautiful happy loving boy turn into a resentful angry defensive child. He ran away, hurt the other children, destroyed his work, threw things at the teacher and so forth. Like your daughter (yes I've read your books) he could also be one of the most beautiful charming little people, a real contradiction. The school believed in sending the child home and lecture the mother on her poor parenting whilst making no effort at all to try and help. Every time I tried to enlist their help they hid behind POLICY!! I did many parenting courses, had a hot line to the parent support line (once when I was really upset as he had taken to urinating on his 8-month-old sister they said "hmm sounds like a discipline problem") and also enlisted the help of a paediatrician. It got to the stage that I wouldn't put the bin out for fear that the school would call whilst I was out. In his first two years at school I lost count of how many times I had to front up to collect him. A friend of mine (I wouldn't have survived this time with out her) kept telling me how

much Drew reminded her of her son whom at that time had been diagnosed with ADHD. I kept saying "Yes, but he can concentrate when he wants to" and "But he's not always like this".

Year 1 started with promise. He seemed to settle down a bit and for the whole term I didn't get any calls to collect him, that is, until about 2 weeks into term 2 it all started again but this time with a vengeance!! It occurred to me that his worst terms were in autumn and spring. I had thought "Allergy" before but been discouraged by the paediatrician (I didn't understand about allergy and food sensitivity in fact I had never heard of food sensitivity). This time I insisted on allergy testing, Drew lit up like a Christmas tree - all grasses, dust mites, cats, peanuts, in fact just about everything except cockroaches he reacted to! My paediatrician was surprised at the result hence my introduction to the big wide world of food sensitivities. With the aid of a dietician and my paediatrician I embarked on the elimination diet. To sum it up, that term Drew was invited to the principal's lunch - the highest honour - and yes I sent him with his own food. The trials showed that most of his problems were to do with salicylates (he used to eat a lot of salicylate rich foods) also some food colourings and preservatives his tolerance was reduced during spring and autumn due to the added problem of his environmental sensitivities.

Unfortunately for Drew diet alone wasn't enough. I found whilst I could guarantee bad behaviour if he ate the wrong things I couldn't guarantee good behaviour if he didn't. A week into term 4 and still on a controlled diet he got into trouble. I shan't air all my grievances about that school but after one I believe unfair suspension and yet more calls to collect him I withdrew him from the school. When I told the school that he would not be returning, the deputy head said, "Well, I think we will all feel a lot safer". However hurtful her comments (made I might add in front of my son) it did serve to make what was a difficult decision so much easier. I kept Drew out of school until the following year when he started at a new school.

I fell in love at first interview with his new wonderful head mistress. I had made them aware of his problems behavioural and academic (he was well behind). But I was not prepared for the caring and support that this school offered. Within the first week the counsellor - another gem - had run a WISC test discovering that whilst Drew has no learning difficulties per se he had difficulty with oral instructions (common I now realize among ADHD children).

She also lent me a book soon to become my saviour: "Different Kids". It was through reading this that finally the pieces started to fall into place. I read up on ADHD. It was really quite spooky the number of times I thought, hey, that's just what Drew does. I also attended yet another parenting course, this time however it was "Parenting your ADHD child". It was wonderful to talk to other mothers. The more I learnt the more I realised that Drew did have ADHD.

The new school was not a solution to all Drew's problems by any means. He still had his trouble. The first (and only) time he ran away, he came all the way home. I was speaking to the principal when he turned up she said "well bring him back"... I was stunned but not nearly as gobsmacked as I was when I brought him back and she gave him a pep talk to let him know that she had faith in him and she was going to help him. Within minutes the defiant look was gone and she had him eating out of her hand. I went home with my mouth still hanging open, I was so used to schools telling me to take him away it was bizarre to have one actually tell me to bring him back!

It has taken a long time and a lot of work including sending him to a behavioural center (yes he had food sensitivities and ADHD but he also had years of being the bad kid always in trouble. He used to cry to me that "I try to be a good boy but I don't know how. I'm just not a good boy".) For the first time in years I am starting to see my beautiful happy loving son again.

I recently joined the ADHD support group and I was delighted when I found out that you were going to be speaking. You are an amazing woman who has given so much to so many people. I am sure I am not the first and I know I won't be the last to say THANK YOU!! You helped me to see in language that I could understand (without a Ph.D. that is) what was happening to my son and how to help him. I would like to speak to others about food sensitivities if I can prevent even one child needlessly suffering as my son did. Once again, thank you for all that you do. - Deborah, Canberra

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

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

[004] Daniel's story: severe colic and reflux (June 1999)

From the minute Daniel was born, he was a very unsettled baby. We went home on day three and I expected he would improve when my milk came in. I work as a midwife, so I had some idea of sleepless nights etc, but nothing had prepared me for a baby who screamed constantly when awake and slept very little. My mum said I had been a very colicky baby and my mother-in-law said my husband had been an extremely colicky baby - so we presumed Daniel was the same ... - Jenny, Vic (see [Success Stories](#) for the rest of this long saga including unnecessary surgery. Eventually Daniel's problem was found to be food intolerance especially salicylates.)

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