

Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

www.fedup.com.au

("depression", "self-harm", "suicide", "panic attacks", "anxiety" keyword only)

[1395] Depression: an update on what I'm calling "the diet that saved my life" (June 2016) COURAGE AWARD



First post:

This diet is freaking amazing!

I have had extremely severe ADHD and Aspergers diagnosed from when I was six and depression so serious that I have been suicidal for the past two years and have had such bad anxiety that I only leave the house about every couple of weeks when I absolutely have no choice. I mainly just lie on the sofa, feeling angry, bitter, exhausted, depressed and resentful of my horrible headspace.

But today ONE FREAKINGG DAY ON THIS WONDER DIET, today I got up, showered and got dressed (a genuine achievement), got ready and went out to town! I have had the best day in months and months, I did my errands, I wasn't in a bad headspace, I wasn't anxious, I was sensible, productive and most of all - HAPPY.

I had previously read about how people noticed extremely quick changes and improvements, sometimes in a number of hours and honestly, I was sceptical. That's all changed now. This diet has already changed my life and it's only the first day.

Onwards and upwards from here hopefully!!! - Ffion from UK.

Two days later:

For those of you who didn't see my first post I have severe major depression which leads to suicidal tendencies, self destructive behaviour and I also have horrific anxiety and very severe ADHD and Aspergers. Or rather.... I USED to.

This morning for the first time in over two years I got up and went for a morning run. I didn't go far and I didn't go fast but it's a start and is just one more indication that I'm really living now - not barely existing like I was previously.

I'm doing the strict elimination diet. To be honest though, I wouldn't care if I had to eat like this for the rest of my life as long as I feel as good as I am now.

Update one month later:

So I've been doing this diet for a month now, I chose to do the very strict total elimination diet because of the colossal amount of issues I was trying to tackle.

I have since done some challenges but have reacted to all so far - especially glutamates! I thought not having the things I used to eat so much of would be really hard (especially since I'm such foodie) but I can honestly say, for the first time ever, that the benefits of not having the stuff (drastically) outweigh the drawbacks.

I can honestly say that since I first started this diet, my life has been unrecognisably changed for the better.

One of the biggest, most welcome changes in me since going on this has been the total disappearance of my crippling anxiety and panic disorder which resulted in me often not being able to leave the house for days on end and leaving me unable to interact with other people as well.

Well like I said, that's not an issue any more. Since last month I actually joined an animal right group (something I feel passionate about). I didn't know anyone in the group and just kind of showed up to one of their open events and introduced myself.

This might not seem strange or much of an achievement but this is coming from the girl who wouldn't answer her house phone because she didn't know who was calling and was afraid it might be someone she didn't know.

Not only that but I have taken part in many of the awareness events that the group do. These events consist of going into the city centre, setting up a stall and talking to the general public to raise awareness about the importance of animal rights. A month ago it would genuinely have been funny to even suggest that I might do something like this because the thought of me being alone, in town, talking to strangers was so ridiculous.

I would also have not been safe to be in town on my own, due to my ADHD prompting me to often act irrationally and impulsively, putting myself and others at risk.

But I'm not that person any more and have taken part in 3 events so far and have loved every one of them! I now have a circle of friends who I see regularly and who, if I do have a hard day like everyone has once in a while, I can call and speak to about what's going on.

There is so much more I could write about, including going into detail about how my self-destructive tendencies have disappeared "as if like magic" some would say but I won't expand on all areas of how things have changed for the better, instead I will just leave you with this.

People always used to know my name for the wrong reasons.

At school I was "that strange girl who can't sit still" or "that girl who had a meltdown when the fire alarms were tested" or "that girl who's suspended because she lost her mind when she was asked to do work with a partner".

At uni I was "that girl who never shows up to lectures because she's scared" or "that girl who never looks anyone in the eye" or "that girl who can't join a conversation without cutting everyone off or shouting out".

I was always known for the wrong reasons.

But now people are actually NOT recognising me, and it's for all the right reasons. People see me doing an

awareness event and say "that can't be Ffion" or they see my pictures of me running and say "ok, but who went with you" because they can't wrap their heads around the fact that it is now safe for me to be out on my own because I am no longer a danger to myself.

Before this diet I was surviving, and now I am genuinely, for the first time in my whole life, living life to the full. And I'm not about to stop - Ffion from UK.

[1378] 160b: feedback from annatto petition 2 (January 2016)

My emotions go 'all over the ship' when I eat anything with 160b in it. I avoid it like the plague – Julie
I have a daughter who reacts badly to annatto 160b. Anger, sleeplessness, slapping her own head repeatedly when angry and not coping: all due to this additive, which is in so, so many food products. Please listen companies, and use alternatives! - Mel

My son reacts badly to 106b we had sleeping issues, anxiousness and hurting himself, tantrums since removing it he is a lot calmer I don't buy anything with this additive in it. It is sad that every ice cream has it in it and also yoghurt particularly children's yoghurt. Food companies need to start doing something about it. – Colleen

[1372] Major Depression, anxiety, muscle pain and other symptoms overcome with the help of a recommended dietitian (December 2015)

I hope my experience is of help or encouragement to someone.

I first did the RPAH Elimination Diet (strict dairy and gluten free) in 1997 after experiencing chronic hives. I had the help of a dietitian and had seen an immunologist. The diet showed I was sensitive to salicylates and amines. For many years I successfully managed my hives by taking a daily antihistamine and also by reducing my intake of very high chemical foods, although I wasn't very strict at all with managing the food side of things.

Over the last 5 years, I rarely had hives anymore, and thought maybe I had outgrown my intolerance. So I gradually increased my food chemicals again. Then in 2012, I experienced a Major Depression for 8 months. I was feeling so low, so hopeless, and crying all the time, it was the darkest time in my life. I work as a Graphic Designer, and I found my creativity totally vanished when I was depressed. This was very frightening, being creative always came so naturally to me, and losing this ability had a big impact on my livelihood too.

I was perplexed as to why I would be depressed, my life was wonderful, I couldn't see a reason for the melancholy that had overtaken me. I remember telling my GP that it felt more like a 'chemical thing', like something was out of balance with my internal chemistry. In hindsight, I should have trusted my instinct on this... instead, I took my GP's advice and I tried therapy, exercise and rest, and then antidepressants (SSRIs). Nothing worked and the antidepressants gave me nasty side effects (nausea, migraine with aura, hot flushes, diarrhoea, nightmares, anxiety, muscle twitches, split tongue, light sensitivity, foggy brain, blocked ears), and then some nasty withdrawals (brain zaps, teary, lack of appetite, insomnia). During the depression, I was also suffering badly with muscle pain. I was seeing a physio very regularly, and taking maximum doses of Panadol every day, but still had chronic pain.

At the time, I was taking fish oil supplements because I believed it may be beneficial in treating depression. I was also taking probiotics, believing it would boost my immune system – I never felt well! I stopped taking probiotics after I saw no measurable benefit, and when I stopped taking them, I noticed my muscle pain actually improved a bit. Then the penny started to drop... maybe my food intolerance symptoms had switched from hives to depression and muscle pain! I realised that the fish oil supplement I was taking was very high in amines, so I stopped taking it, and noticed a further improvement with my muscle pain and eventually my

mood. Then I started searching online to see if depression and muscle pain were known symptoms of food intolerance. Back in 1997 I don't recall being informed that these could be symptoms, but sure enough I found myself reading about other people's experiences on FedUp! Thanks to you for all the work you have done and continue to do, to shed light on this complex and misunderstood issue. Your forum and website, and cookbook really helped me put the pieces of my own health puzzle in place.

So then I also began to reduce my food chemicals, and other chemicals such as perfumes, and cleaning products, and I saw a slow but steady improvement in my depression! I wanted to be sure I was on the right track, so I booked a dietitian to help me through the RPAH Elimination Diet again. I started elimination with a local dietitian, only to quickly realise she didn't have enough experience or knowledge in this area. For example, she advised me to liberalise my diet as I went through the challenges, adding back any foods I didn't respond to. I knew that this was likely to confuse my results, and immediately lost confidence in that particular dietitian. I voiced my frustration about this on your forum and thankfully another member recommended a marvellous failsafe dietitian to me. I was so happy to find that she was able to help me straight away. It was such a relief to have her insight and also her support through the rest of the process. She really took the time to consider my case, treating me as an individual, and showing great compassion towards any struggles I had. With anxiety and depression being triggered during my challenges, she was wonderful at encouraging me to stick with it until the end.

The results of my elimination this time were much clearer and more accurate than last time, and this was mostly due to her attention to detail, and ongoing support. She was very generous with her email support and this made all the difference during the tricky challenges. I am now finished my challenges, and have discovered that salicylates trigger ringing ears, acne, restless sleep, mouth ulcers, and anxiety. Amines cause depression and muscle pain. Food has always been a real source of joy for me, and although it is tough to accept that I have to restrict certain foods, it is immensely empowering to be able to manage my health this way. My lovely dietitian is now helping me to liberalise my diet, and has been brilliant with offering me a few different approaches for how to manage this stage too - Rachel by email

[1361] 160b: A nightmare state from annatto in cheese (November 2015)

Last night I ate Long Clawson Aged Leicestershire Red Cheese (from the UK) and by early AM had sneezing, feeling strange, and developing a horrid headache. I started to get swelling in my eyelids and my teeth & neck muscles started to ache. This is what happens when I eat food with various stuff like histamine, oxalates, nitrates, etc. I did feel slight concern when eating it because it is orange cheese but I thought it was from the Long Clawson dairy & would be all natural. It does have annatto & I've found your site. \$#*& (Swear word) I haven't had reactions to food in a few weeks and this means my day (at least) will be more or less ruined.

LATER: I forgot to add that I was extremely emotionally distressed and feeling just very strange unpleasant emotional feelings. I felt that my thinking wasn't functioning normally, not just that I had a headache, but that I was in a kind of nightmare state. I know that sounds extreme but I really did. I felt terrified and that I would not feel like me again. Panic, hopelessness, etc. That night, well early the next morning I had the most horrific nightmare and I actually screamed out loud repeatedly until a family member came to see what was wrong.

In the nightmare I was laying exactly where I was in reality but there was some kind of evil being in the next room planning to do me harm and in the dream, and in a way in reality I was temporarily paralyzed. It was absolutely horrid. I have never ever had something like that in my life. It took hours for me to feel just safe, though I realized it was a nightmare rationally, physically and emotionally I still felt I couldn't shake it off for ages. All the next day I was like a zombie, felt not totally alert and very shaken from this nightmare.

I would say it took me at least 3 days to really start feeling better and have all the reactions subside.

I feel really certain it was related to the annatto. When I started getting the reaction I looked at all the things I had eaten. The cheese was something new to me, and so I read the ingredients. I threw it in the bin and good riddance - Lori, USA

[1352] 160b annatto: feedback from petition 1 (September 2015)

This food colouring always sends my daughter into depression - Nicole J

My children react to 160b with aggressive behaviour, sleeplessness and depression – Jennifer

My kid eats food with annatto and has insomnia, restlessness, anxiety and extreme behaviour. It's not needed. It's a colour. The food tastes the same – Marney

Within minutes of eating 160b my daughter is screaming, yelling and crying and hitting herself in the head. I avoid 160b like the plague – Kalista

Eating foods coloured with annatto 160(b) causes irrational anger and increased impatience in my 35-year-old self, so I'm not surprised that it causes such self-harming behaviour in children. I would love to have a greater variety of dessert products available to myself and my family – Keira

[1339] Depression: facebook thread (June 2015)

Has anyone had any success with managing depression with diet? - Mary

Removing salicylates worked a treat for me smile emoticon - Anna

My brother in law has removed gluten from his diet and his bouts of anxiety and depression have basically vanished - Sarah

Paleo can be very effective. You can follow Pete Evans page which has stories from people on paleo. Lots there about helping with depression - Erin (There are other views about Paleo, see <http://scepticalnutritionist.com.au/?p=1523> for example)

Glutamates and amines and additives are all likely culprits too. Paleo is great but not if you have amine or salicylate problems, try the elimination and see if it gives you some answers and then you can move onto other ways of eating with confidence. - Shannon

And also putting lots of exercise. I've always found exercise, just walking, really helps me. The hard bit is that when I feel down I don't want to help myself..but I know I have to - Toni

I found a huge difference when I eliminated sugar as much as possible and coffee, upped water intake and eliminated gluten, even if you try it for 2 weeks you will feel a huge difference and see what a difference it can make - Anna

Honestly, yes. I have eased my anxiety and frequent panic attacks by about 90% after eliminating salts and additives (and the remaining 10% do occur when I cheat too much or if I'm having a reaction). I had episodes of major depression in my life and I also feel like I have had much better control over my emotions. Try exercise too, it's magical - Jessica

Yep sals, amines and additives for me. I pay for it when I cheat. Though I've been doing fs (for kids) in conjunction with meds - Emma

Amines makes me seriously depressed. And to think of all the chocolate I ate when I was depressed was only making it worse! - Carla

Amines make me depressed too. My GP looks at me like I've lost the plot when I tell her this - Rachel
I firmly believe that my daughter is alive today because of failsafe. Severe childhood depression, suicidal tendencies and anxiety. When she slips off the diet, her symptoms resurface. She is now 23 and keeping on a somewhat even keel, despite going through a lot of horrible times over the past 24 months or so - Sharon

[1338] Amines: “Failsafe eating has been a huge help in managing my anxiety and depression” (July 2015)

Failsafe eating has been a huge help in managing my anxiety and depression, along with a very supportive husband and extended family, exercise and seeking help from supportive health professionals (dietitian, GP and psychologist). I've struggled in the past and now realise that those times coincided with an increase in processed foods, takeaways and chocolate.

For me, amines are the worst trigger for low mood, causing a 'spaced out' feeling, irritability, noise sensitivity as well as muscle pains. It is usually worst about three days after eating the offending food. I am also sensitive to dairy and very high salicylates.

My children (ages 7, 5 and 17 months) are very sensitive to salicylates, amines, dairy and additives/preservatives. I discovered my intolerances by doing the elimination diet while breastfeeding and found that keeping to low chemical foods helped my babies sleep a bit better and therefore helped my sleep and mood symptoms.

These days, I am very aware of my mood symptoms and have a management plan in place should I feel myself slipping. I credit failsafe eating with helping me return to a brighter mood relatively quickly and avoiding a relapse of postnatal depression with my second and third children. I notice an interaction with hormones as well, and the period after weaning from breastfeeding is always tricky, trying to balance my desire to eat a wider diet with the change in hormones. During breastfeeding, I sometimes noticed "depressive/dysphoric milk ejection reflex" which has been linked to dopamine levels. (http://www.d-mer.org/Home_Page.html)

These days, I eat out very occasionally but always return to failsafe eating at home, as it's not worth those wasted days feeling miserable and missing out on life. Thanks again for all you do in raising awareness of failsafe eating, for both adults and children - Amelia

[1337] Depression: “salicylates caused many symptoms I hadn't realised I had”

I regularly see a psychologist having suffered from depression, anxiety and paranoia of varying degrees over the last 6 years some of which was due to a trauma I suffered in 2012. Although I refused medication my symptoms did get incredibly severe at many points in this time. I found that seeing a psychologist slowly helped in relation to the trauma and eating “clean” and doing very regular exercise helped overall, but I still wasn't anywhere near well. It wasn't until last year when I saw a dietitian for bowel, fatigue and skin problems that I realised what I was eating could be affecting my overall mental health. Although I saw my dietician regularly at the start of my diet change, I rarely saw her after the first 6 months. The fed up website, Facebook group, “Tolerating troublesome foods” and the RPAH elimination diet book were the best resources for me; my dietician usually referred me back to them anyway. I only speak to her when I need specific advice as I found just talking through symptoms with my partner and family, keeping a food diary (essential!) and regularly seeing my psychologist

were the best ways for me to see changes and keep tabs on my symptoms. Having said this i would definitely recommend having a professional supervise you when starting out.

I did the elimination diet/challenges and found I felt much better when fs, proving that salicylates caused many symptoms I hadn't realised I had, to name a few: fatigue, inability to concentrate, terrible motor skills, foggy head and sleepless nights. As you can imagine these symptoms all contributed negatively to my mental health. I'm still working on finding what foods aggravate depression for me as I've been yo-yoing on and off the diet. I suspect my dairy and sals intolerance together being the main foods contributing to my depression but I really can't say that for certain yet.

I recently found that soy severely triggers anxiety attacks for me. Caffeine also has a severe effect on my mood sometimes even decaf leaves me agitated and restless so I'm starting to think legumes could be a major issue for me. Of course the severity of my symptoms does change with the environmental factors and stresses that I'm experiencing at the time, however I am certain now that the soy mocha coffees that I used to drink every day, the rich tomato sauces, dark green vegetables, loads of fruit and juices that I loved so much (which I thought at the time were so healthy for me!) all very negatively impacted my mental health.

Now while maintaining a low-moderate salicylate, dairy, soy and caffeine free diet I feel much better mentally and physically. I'm always encouraging my family to try the diet as I know they have very similar symptoms to me and I'm almost certain it will be due to the same intolerance. I still have a long way to go in testing other food chemicals but just by removing some foods I feel like I've changed my entire life! – Sue

[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

[1312] 160b annatto: One-liners (March 2015)

Jittery movements, anxiety, foggy head, eczema - Lynda

[1304] More reports of self harm from food intolerance (February 2015)

If my little one has amines she is depressed. She cries uncontrollably. My sister in law also has been battling depression and anxiety. She finally listened to me changed her diet and now she no longer wants to kill herself - Kylie

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

If you count depression as an emotion – Susan

[1297] 200: Sorbates and depression (January 2015)

I looked for information on sorbates years ago and never found any. Now that I see you have stories on your web site like mine, I'll tell my story. I'd like others who have the same problems to learn of the cause much earlier than I did.

It started sometime around 1990, and that's a guess. I had a slow onset of fatigue, which some called laziness.

It would start as my simply being weak, slow and stupid. I didn't even know it was happening. This would be deepest for a couple of hours and the go away, followed by hours of fatigue. I just felt crappy.

But I didn't understand the effect myself. It affected my humour, my marriage and my job. I just seemed to change. I didn't even see that it varied. But when I look back, I ate foods regularly with sorbic acid/potassium sorbate.

It only got worse over several years. It manifested into what was diagnosed as depression. I went to different doctors trying to find a cure and they tried 4 different anti-depressants. Nothing helped. No one considered that it was better and worse at different times, least of all me. I have to say it was awful, a terrible emotional load to be told it is all in your head, there is nothing physically wrong with you.

In 2001 it all changed. I made the decision to lose weight and I chose a low carbohydrate diet on my doctor's recommendation. I started walking for fitness at the same time. I got much better and only rarely had problems. I went to a gym and got into the best shape of my adult life. Before that I had included both yoghurt and Miracle Whip.

I had cut almost all the sugar from my diet and felt much better. Because of this I decided I had a sugar problem.

Over the next two years I ruled out things until I finally realized it was the sorbic acid. Since then I have been pretty much free of its effects, and every time I have had them I traced it to sorbic acid, potassium sorbate or polysorbate 80.

Later: After the many years of misery this caused me, I would like very much for other to learn that not only can this happen, it does happen and is too rare to be part of the medical record. There is nothing that will cause depression, and possibly lead to suicide, like being told a very real problem is "in your head". If it wasn't for my refusal to accept "the truth" and keep on looking for a solution, I would not be here. I wonder how many people never know of the very real cause of their problems - Jim from forum.

[1296] 282: "the meltdowns and self harming stopped the next day" (December 2014)

My daughter has always been a little bit of a 'wired' child. She had eczema until she was 3 and many strange rashes after eating that came and went. However, all of this was quite manageable and she was otherwise a healthy, happy kid. Then, when she was 4 years old she overnight became utterly unmanageable. Her slight anxiety blew out of control, she was melting down 4-10 times a day over tiny things, she was disagreeable, angry and miserable (this was a child that never did the terrible twos or was a tantrum thrower). Nothing in our home life had changed, nothing seemed different except her. She was repeatedly saying terrible negative things that I never expected to hear from a small child. Worst of all, she started hurting herself during these melt downs. She would tear and her skin all up her arms until it bled, she would bite her arms until she bruised them and rip her hair out. I was completely lost.

I went to the GP who referred me to a paediatrician. He took it fairly seriously given its sudden onset and ordered a ream of tests. Waiting for the results seemed to take forever and in my desperation I was reading everything I could find. Somewhere, somehow I came across information about child behaviour and food intolerances and was directed to the FedUp website. I searched my brain. Was anything different in our diet in the 8 weeks she had been like this? We didn't eat much packaged food anyway - but YES. Since the beginning of that year I had been buying a different 'healthy looking' gluten free commercial sliced bread for my daughters lunch (we never had much bread as I'm coeliac). She had been having this bread almost every day and her consumption of it coincided perfectly with the onset of this behaviour. I ran to the kitchen - I just knew it must have this 282 preservative I'd been reading about. It did and I threw it in the bin. The meltdowns and self harming stopped the next day, three days before we re-visited the paediatrician to be told there was nothing wrong with her and that it was a parenting issue.

Since that time we have had only two re-emergences of this awful, awful behaviour, only ever mildly and short lived (it's coming up to two years now since this horror 8 weeks of my life). Further investigation has shown she is sensitive to some degree to natural food chemicals, particularly amines and we limit those. I have never had the guts to retest her with anything with 282 in it and am happy to never have it in my house as long as I live.

When I saw those awful statistics about young kids and self harm I felt sick. This is on the rise just like all allergies and mental health conditions are on the rise. I had to share my story and hope it can help someone else or get action - Kylie by email.

[1291] Depression and food intolerance - my story (November 2014) COURAGE AWARD

To coin a phrase from the UK Inland Revenue advertising....."To have depression, is very depressing". It is also very debilitating, with symptoms of loss of energy and fatigue, poor concentration, physical and mental slowing down and anxiety. I had all these symptoms over a period of forty years, and they increased in intensity during the twenty-year period from 1960. During this time, I was married and had two children. It was a difficult time, as the depression affected my working life, although I was able to hold down a job as a dispenser in retail pharmacy, my accuracy at dispensing was not compromised, but promotion eluded me. During the early 70's, I opened my own drug store in the City of London it was a struggle to order goods, keep the books, and I was under constant stress to maintain the status quo.

By this time, I was under medication from my G.P., which did not have any effect. He also recommended group therapy, which I attended on a weekly basis. This was a total waste of time, as I realised that I was not like the people who attended each session, especially as I learned that some of them had been going for four years, and still had the same problems. By this time I was becoming suicidal, as I could not cope with the idea that I would have to wake up each morning with all the symptoms, and fight my way through each and every day.

I then decided to take stock of the situation and realised that there must be a hidden agenda and a cause for my depression. I started going to the library (no internet in those days) to look for some thing that could help me. One of the books I found was "Not all in the Mind" by Dr. Richard Mackarness. From this book, I discovered the world of food allergy and food intolerance that Dr. Mackarness had encountered on his trip to America in 1958 when he stayed with Dr.Ted Randolph at his clinic in Chicago. He learnt that Dr.Albert Rowe in the 1920's and 30's, designed what he called the elimination diet, this was further improved by Dr. Randolph who introduced the five day fast at the beginning of an investigation. On returning to the UK, Dr. Mackarness tested this method in his general practice for several years.

However, the case that caught my attention was a patient who was violent, self harming, abusing her children and with strong feelings of guilt. She had been treated with ECT and a wide variety of medications in high doses, which did not produce any improvement. The doctors were considering brain surgery. Dr Mackarness suggested that food intolerance could be the problem. He then set up an experiment under controlled conditions where he starved the patient for five days and then she was given test doses of specified foods. It was shown that certain foods (one of which was pork) made her violent, and if she kept off those foods, her condition improved drastically. So much so, that she was sent home with no medication at all, and remained well, as long as she kept to the safe foods.

Was this the cause of my own problems? My mother had been diagnosed with manic depression, which was never resolved, even though she was treated with ECT and was on continuous medication, and she died of a cerebral haemorrhage. Could she have had the same problem? Why didn't my GP ever mention that food could have been the source of my depression?

I then decided to eliminate wheat and dairy products from my diet, to see what would happen. This was a tough decision as my favourite foods were bread, weetabix, cow's milk, cheese, ice cream and biscuits. However, I persisted, and I remember waking up one morning, three weeks later, with a clear head, and not feeling tired.. I was normal!!!!!! It was an incredible feeling.

To make up for the foods I had eliminated, I was eating a lot of eggs and chocolate. The symptoms returned, so they were out. Eventually, I found that oats and rye affected me, also beer – anything with grain. My alcoholic refreshments were limited to the grape, champagne, brandy and red wine....not bad, I suppose. However, my intake of fruit and vegetables increased, I could eat fish and meat. I stopped tea and coffee, and kept to fruit juice and herb and fruit teas. Rice cakes replaced bread.

Today, there are plenty of wheat-free, gluten-free and dairy-free foods, soya and goat's milk, cheese and yoghurt. However, for thirty plus years, I have lived an active life without wheat and dairy products. At age eighty, I am still active. I have my own teeth, and I am not on any allopathic medication. I eat organic foods (without pesticides, hormones, herbicides, and additives).

In the area of mental health, it is sad that the medical profession has chosen to ignore food intolerance, even though it has been proven (especially by the work of Dr. Mackarness) that food can be a contributory factor. In my opinion, the two indications to food intolerance and mental health is:- 1) the food that you love the most and crave for, is the one that is doing the most harm and, 2) if long term medication is not producing a cure, then there is probably another agenda. Elimination diets can be carried out in tandem with medication to see what happens.

In January 2006, the Mental Health Foundation launched their campaign "Feeding Minds The impact of food on mental health". They asked me if I would tell my story to the media and I was on BBC1 TV, BBC Five Live and LBC, plus other newspaper follow-ups.

"My Story" and other articles have been published in the U.K. newsletter of the "Action Against Allergy" organisation which was founded by Dr. Mackarness, who in his later life retired to Australia.

My mission is to spread the word, especially as there is an increase in mental problems amongst the younger generation whose diet needs to be addressed, rather than blanket medication - Brian from the UK

[1227] Bipolar: NOTE TO SELF! STOP EATING AVOCADOS! (October 2013)

After years of thinking I had a mental illness, being told I had bipolar, filling my body with hideous drugs that made my hair fall out, gave my acne and basically turned me into a zombie and got me to a point where I was totally ready to end my life, I have been totally drug free, symptom free and depression free and manic free since we started FS! I didn't start FS for me, I was doing it for my boys! 8 months have passed and I haven't bothered to do the challenges myself, I've been too busy trying to sort all their issues out. Well this week, I have been testing my boys on the different types of amines. For the last 3 days we have all been eating avocados! OMG THEY ARE SO YUMMY!

I am sitting at my desk today, I feel so horrible. I'm crying at everything, it feels like the world is caving in on me, I feel like nothing is right, I'm anxious, frustrated, angry, sad, Oh that's right, according to Drs I have BIPOLAR! quick take some drugs!

NOTE TO SELF! STOP EATING AVOCADOS! and remember this horrible feeling will pass as soon as this food is out of my system! – facebook group member.

[1206] 'Feeling like a drunken sailor is not just "the way I am" - it is possible to have a fog-free brain and a calm, happy life!' (July 2013)

I'm 22 years old and have always had issues with anxiety, and since I was in my early teens I've suffered from bowel problems. I saw a doctor about it a few years ago who diagnosed me with IBS and said there wasn't much I could do. I was put on the fodmap diet and saw some improvement, but my anxiety seemed to get worse. Then my Mum told me about you because she had some kids at school trialling the diet to treat their ADHD.

I bought your book and I felt like you were writing about me and my family! All of us have symptoms of food intolerance: my sister who is hypoglycaemic and prone to mood swings and my brother who is withdrawn, quiet and unmotivated. I could relate to so many of the symptoms: reflux as a baby, constant ear infections as a child, anxiety and OCD habits (handwashing, wringing my hands etc) and in my teenage years I felt distracted, foggy brained, unmotivated and developed depression in my last year of high school.

Since I've started the elimination diet there has been a slow improvement, and it wasn't until I considered everything together that I realised how much better I feel. I could go on forever with the improvements! I don't feel drunk or dizzy anymore, I don't take 5 wrong turns when driving to the shops (used to happen all the time), I can concentrate at uni and feel more awake, I am calm and so much happier, don't snap at my boyfriend over silly things AND my stomach cramps and bloating are gone: I have normal bowel movements for the first time in years!!!! My boyfriend has been really supportive and did the diet with me, not expecting much. I saw changes in him from the first week- he is happier, calmer and more enthusiastic about life. He even said to me when we reintroduced sals that he felt like his patience got much shorter and he had trouble sleeping.

I've only done two food challenges so far: I tested dairy first, since I had thought for years that I was lactose intolerant, and passed. I've just completed the sals challenge and it seems to be a culprit. I went for a week feeling fine, though I did have a little bit of dermatitis on my hands and a day where i felt sad and a bit hopeless. I kept on because I wanted to be more certain, and it didn't take long! From around day 8 I felt tired, distracted and 'drunk while driving' again, I slept over 10 hours each night but woke feeling exhausted, snapped at my boyfriend over nothing and had trouble controlling my body temperature, like I had a cold. It has taken me around 3 days to start feeling better, but I am already feeling more lucid. I'm just so excited to finally know where to start to feel better :) Finding out about the RPAH elimination diet and the Food Intolerance Network has made me realise that feeling like a drunken sailor every day is not "just the way I am" and that it is possible to have a fog-free brain and a calm, happy life! :)

Thanks so much Sue, for everything that you're doing to help people feel well, and helping kids to avoid a life of medication and labels! - Isobel, by email

[1179] Failsafe high school graduation success: one of the highest OPs in her school (February 2013)

Thank you for all your efforts over the years. I am certainly a champion of the cause after the success we have had with our daughter. Anyone that talks of issues with their children I talk about FAILSAFE, even buy the books for them.

In 2003 the teachers, doctors and paediatrician all wanted to medicate our daughter for ADD. She was behind in school, had trouble keeping friends, would have fits of rage then extreme bouts of depression, wanting to self harm or die. It was tragic and heartbreaking. Looking back we now see how we went from a really good baby to a terrible twos and beyond ... after the introduction of main stream solids. I was quite determined not to take the easy way out and spend \$20 a month on subsidised dexamphetamine ... so my research led me to Fed Up. We haven't looked back, yes admittedly we have slipped over the years but behaviours and moods always bring us back. It's been a long and at times arduous journey but well worth the effort.

Our daughter graduated high school last year with one of the highest OPs in her school which guaranteed her entry into a number of top universities. Everyone (including the teachers) comments on how polite and engaging she is as a teenager.

My advice to those starting the failsafe journey ... hang in there ... the rewards are well worth the effort. Thank you Sue and Howard! - D from Brisbane

[1167] Crushing depression after food (January 2013)

I can't agree that intolerances are never fatal. My father and I get crushing depression after we eat foods to which we are intolerant (e.g. nutmeg, cinnamon or wines). It doesn't last long (36 hours) but it's really unpleasant. I suspect a proportion of suicides are ultimately caused by the mood effects of undiagnosed food intolerances. After all, you can't avoid it if you don't know you're intolerant to it. Tragically, I hear some antidepressants are also high in the same chemicals (salicylates and amines). This may account for some of the sudden suicides seen when people first begin antidepressant medications – from online comment on an ABC news program discussing food intolerance <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/talkback-food-intolerance/2996308#comments>

[1128] Depression and food: "rolling fits of blackness came over me" (September 2012)

'Too ugly to contemplate' - that was the heading in the news edition email from Crikey.com.au I have just received. I immediately thought it was a news story about someone like me. It fits the way I am feeling perfectly. But of course it wasn't.

And then I had the idea to write about the way I'm feeling. To document this: even though I feel so awful I'd rather just curl up in bed and disappear. I've started writing a work related blog recently and I have received some enjoyment from it, and so I thought I'd try writing about this experience tonight as a way to detach, to get my head out of this space. I have enough wherewithal (and experience) to understand that what I'm going through at the moment is a direct result of the lunch I have eaten. But knowing that doesn't stop me feeling suicidal, it just stops me from legitimising my thoughts as valid, from spending time listing all the reasons why my life isn't worth living, as I once used to do.

I have spent many years experiencing episodes like this and it occurs to me, after "RUOK" day this week, that I haven't seen any information about this particular trigger. I haven't read much about how some people can become profoundly depressed by the foods they have eaten.

I don't want to say which foods set me off, but suffice it to say it's been a long journey to figure it out. I've avoided these types of foods for a while but today was a farewell lunch for a colleague and I wanted to join in with everyone. It was a new restaurant, and I hoped it would be OK.

Within thirty minutes I had the first symptom, which was a dense fogginess in my brain, as though I was barely there, like a zombie, and then I felt a slight head pressure, almost a headache. I knew I was having a reaction to the food but I didn't yet know how bad it was going to be. I haven't had a strong reaction for years. And then two hours later I had the first "what's the point of living, I have absolutely nothing to live for" moment. Within another hour or two rolling fits of blackness came over me; the deep and utter despair, overwhelming feelings of worthlessness and irrelevance and unimportance. I know this will take 36-48 hours to clear my system. I'm glad I don't have much on this weekend.

As I said I have spent many years having episodes like this, through most of my teenage years (if not earlier) and much of my twenties. It was only in my thirties that I heard about food intolerance, as opposed to food allergies, and I tried the elimination diet. I have found that certain chemical numbers and a couple of relatively common food items have a severe negative effect on my mood. There are also other ingredients that affect me which I haven't identified yet, but I know they are in certain sauces so I avoid them just in case. Somehow I have very low motivation to isolate the ingredients to determine which particular chemical is making me feel like I am nothing but a useless, pointless energy sucking black hole on the planet!

I sometimes talk to people about my food sensitivities, and while most people are polite, their response is often one of disbelief. The people who nod vigorously are usually sufferers themselves or they have gone through the process with their children, seeing how they respond to certain foods. It's harder for people who take more than a couple of hours to react to make the link to a certain food - for some people it can take days for the symptoms to show, or there are no symptoms until a certain threshold is reached (a little is OK, a lot is not).

There's not any where near enough research done on this.

There is increasing recognition that asthma and eczema are linked to food intolerance/sensitivity, as well as several studies showing that certain foods (particularly additives) can cause hyperactivity, but I have yet to see much research done in terms of foods and links to mood, especially depression. As for me, I'm obviously totally convinced, and I figure if I exist there will be others who have similar food sensitivities, so I thought I'd write about it. I am also allergic to some foods and I have very sensitive skin, so I know there's something about my chemical makeup that makes me sensitive to the world I'm living in.

In general, we know so little about how our bodies react to the world we are living in, and the changes in our food and broader environment have been dramatic in the last few decades. If you suspect this might be relevant for you, I should warn you there is no quick test. Determining your/your children's sensitivities is a long and thorough process but the benefits when everything is sorted are incalculable. – Jude by email

[1119] Night terrors gone (August 2012)

Our 7 year old daughter has been living in anxiety and terror at night and also in the day has to be with someone else in the room. I have been trying the diet with her for one and half weeks no amines, glutamates and moderate salicylates only. Last night was her first fear free night. I could cry with relief. - Rachel by email

[1117] One-liners after Fedup Roadshow (August 2012) excerpt

I am so enjoying the many conversations I'm having with people who attended the talk. Many have made changes with huge benefits. One mother told me how she had been about to go on antidepressants for long-standing depression, and after a week of being fs "all the scary voices had disappeared". She also couldn't get over the changes in her children's behaviour, and just how much easier it is to parent them! – Tiffany by email

[1091] One-liners (January 2012)

'Thanks for all the work you've done on food additives and the effects they have on people. Without it, I would never have tracked down the weird heart palpitations and early morning panic attacks I have after eating ribonucleotides - Lynne by email.

[1074] Depression, compulsive hair pulling (trichotillomania) due to food intolerance (December 2011)

I have been on anti-depressants and a mood stabiliser in the past. However, if I stick to failsafe eating, there is no problem with any of that stuff - see story [963] below.

If I cheat, boy do I pay the price!! The first sign of reaction is hair pulling, followed very rapidly with other reactions. By the next day, I feel absolutely horrid. I don't want to live, I don't even want to see anyone, including family. I feel like I have the worst hangover ever. I actually feel sick enough to be in hospital. My husband and adult daughter know straight away if I've cheated.

It still blows my mind to think that food can have such an impact on sensitive individuals. It has happened every

time I've cheated, so I definitely know it's a food reaction. It's also like an addiction. If I get a taste of prohibited foods, I can't stop myself. All I can think about is the wrong foods, even though I know how rotten I will feel. My system is so sensitive, I will know if a food smells strong and I feel sick from the aroma, I can't eat it. I have tried soda bi-carb in water as an antidote. It works sometimes and I will have bi-carb baths. The last resort is to water fast. By the next day I feel myself again. Liz, NSW

[1070] The real surprise: depression in my 12 yo was due to amines (September 2011)

I came to your talk last year for my 8 year old son who was a little rascal and full on at school. We started the diet as a family for him- and his problem turned out to be artificial colours and some other additives. But the real surprise was my 12 year old son who was suffering from severe depression and had just started with a psychologist. He started slowly getting better and at first we thought the psychologist was helping but it was because we had changed our diet. His severe depression turned out to be due to amines and is gone completely on the diet. He is now a beautiful, happy boy. It wasn't until we ate the old foods again that I realised what life had been like, and saw the difference. I would tell others to stick with it and persist because improvements can be subtle and gradual. My boys are achieving so much more at school. Your work has changed their future, their lives and ours forever and we are profoundly grateful.

**[1068] Grandmother's night terrors, anxiety, paranoia, depression and brain fog helped by diet (July 2011)
COURAGE AWARD**

My daughter bought the Fed Up book to help her son, my one year old grandson who was cranky, unable to sleep, hyperactive and constantly cleared his throat. After reading the book, I saw myself in the symptoms of night terrors, anxiety, depression and brain fogginess. So I joined him on the diet (we all live together) and I haven't had one night terror since. (Prior to this I was having at least 5 night terrors a week and hated going to bed.) I have had the occasional bad dream when eating off the diet, but nothing like they were. My anxiety lifted, the depression went away and for the first semester since returning to university I understood what they were saying, I participated in class and started talking and laughing like a 'normal' person.

Before that I was constantly anxious, paranoid, stressed and felt 'stupid.' I thought people didn't like me, I wasn't good enough, and I was unmotivated to reach my goals.

My husband didn't believe in food affecting people, and was critical of our changes, however has seen remarkable changes in the baby and in me. He said to me recently 'what's the matter with you?' as I was sullen and quiet. I admitted I ate something off the diet (but I used to be like that most of the time). Now he cooks me failsafe meals at night and reads labels before buying foods.

I stay away from additives, salicylates, amines, glutamates and dairy. It can be difficult to eat a limited diet, but the world is so much more fun, it's worth it!

Thank you for writing the books and creating the DVD. It's given me back the opportunity to experience the wonderful life I have. - Monica

[1053] 320: Mislabelling by a major food company (from submission to FSANZ 2006)

Six months ago our daughter developed severe behavioural problems, including depression, lack of motivation, poor sleeping habits, lethargy and loss of enthusiasm. These were very uncharacteristic of a hard-working fulltime student and a complete puzzle to her concerned teachers. As a consequence, her exam results declined, as did her study performance.

Her problems were eventually traced to her consumption of home-baked products containing Dairysoft, a butter-oil blend manufactured by one of Australia's largest companies, the Murray Goulburn Co-Operative Ltd.

Our daughter is known to be affected by antioxidants 310-312 and 319-321 and several other food additives. Before she started using Dairysoft, verbal advice was obtained from Murray Goulburn that there were no antioxidants in the oil which comprised 22% of the product.

After months of increasing problems, we contacted Murray Goulburn again and were now that informed that the canola oil in the product did in fact contain 320, Butylated Hydroxyanisole.

Our daughter removed Dairysoft from her diet and she has since made a complete recovery, although there can be no compensation for the six months of pain and uncertainty which she suffered. Following complaints, Murray Goulburn have now correctly labeled this product, although without any food recall, product safety or public apology notice. – parents from Darwin.

[1004] Challenges: 3 week reaction to amines (March 2011)

My son's reaction to amine foods is always the same: depression, crying for nothing, being angry, seeking conflicts, ODD like behaviour and many attacks of night terrors (like 5 times in a 2-week-period). He had very strong reactions to pork meat and to chocolate, and the effects to those foods lasted for almost 3 weeks even after stopping the challenge. His reaction to salicylates is the usual hyperactive, silly behaviour, talking too much/too loud and having more little accidents.- by email, Europe

[963] Depression and social phobia: diet a lifesaver (October 2010) COURAGE AWARD

I can't tell you how happy I am to have found out about FAILSAFE (by accident). It's only day three and I feel like a different person. However, I will be aware of any withdrawal symptoms over the next few days or weeks.

If this diet works, as I'm sure it will, you will have literally saved my life. I was on the brink of giving up. I felt my life was over. Words can't describe how ill and depressed I had become. Life was miserable. No doctor wanted to help, couldn't help or just didn't believe me. One doctor told me my symptoms were all psychosomatic.

I went to the shops today and didn't have social phobia. That in itself is a miracle. My depression has lifted. My nerves are calm and my tummy is happy. It's not a chore in any way to eat the foods recommended and avoid the others.

Update after one month - Overall, the depression is the best it's ever been. Of course, there have been days where I've felt down and discouraged. Even then, I handled a relapse of chronic fatigue more positively than I have ever done before. My daughter noticed this too and told me so. I just took one day at a time and listened to my body. Many days were spent flat on my back, which is the best thing I could have done anyway.

The social phobia is long standing (since about 8yrs old). Looking back at my childhood, I think that there were many foods that were affecting me. I had terrible shyness, was afraid of everything, had constipation, tummy aches, migraines, bad breath, heat intolerance, fluctuating weight and eating disorders (binges and starving).

Update after six months – I am happy to report ongoing improvements in overall mental, emotional and health conditions. I have had around 40 people now, tell me how amazing I am looking (I must have looked terrible before). They ask me what's my secret? I am happy to tell them- FAILSAFE!! I will never go back to eating the way I was. This diet is for life. - Liz, NSW

[875] Onset of depression, aggression and hyperactivity in a 6 yo linked to school canteen food (November 2009)

My six year old son was diagnosed with asthma/allergy at 2 years old. Several medications were diagnosed for him. Not wanting to go down this path I consulted a naturopath, who managed his condition with vitamins and restricted diet. But this year upon starting school my normally bright, happy child became depressed, aggressive and hyperactive. A pattern of school canteen usage emerged at which point I requested a list of ingredients for some of the things he was buying. To my horror, the slushy he was ordering contained two artificial colours and two preservatives (benzoate preservative 211 and potassium sorbate 202). The lady who runs the canteen said that this product is known as an AMBER school product. Apparently you are allowed to sell it in canteens as long as you do not have too many other AMBER products on the menu. – Leesa, by email

[814] Depression and anxiety due to processed foods (June 2009) COURAGE AWARD

I am total agreement with your stories regarding depression etc due to food intolerance. I suffered for about ten years trying all sorts of things. I was depressed, anxious and had a host of strange sensations and numbness, foggy, bad tempered, the list goes on.

The diet I followed was basically to eat non processed foods, and I believe what I was actually eliminating was flavour enhancers, including HVP and other hidden enhancers. I have felt that MSG has been my downfall, although things like other additives are excluded.

I continue to work now at 66, with a clear head and vitality. I am angry at the time I have spent seeing doctors and withdrawing from society due to low esteem and negative feelings. Angry is a little strong and just relieved that I have found relief without drugs/medication of any sort.

As with some of the other people who have written in, I found relief by my own experimentation. Dangerous, but I did it. And it worked. I have relayed my story to many people and doctors, and I would say most of them don't really believe that this will work, and that is the problem. I understand that, because in my earlier days I would have thought the same.

Following my diet was very difficult with only a little change in the early stages (like the first week), and in the early days, I didn't think it would work. Luckily I stuck to it. I try to impress people that the diet appears boring but in the end one's sanity is the objective. It took me about two weeks for a reasonable and significant improvement, and two months for complete and total freedom from symptoms. – Ralph, by email

UPDATE at Fedup Roadshow 2011: 'I have to give you an update. Originally I thought MSG was to blame, but now I realise it could have been any of the nasty additives and ingredients in processed foods.'

[806] Story [342] Part 2: Helpless, hopeless depression five years on (June 2009)

I wrote story 342 (Helpless, hopeless depression due to salicylates: I have suffered depression since at least age 15 and am 38 now ...) five years ago when I was relatively new to Failsafe, about a year and a half in. It has taken me a long time to figure out all the finer points, and I'm probably still learning. But it's a journey back to myself. I am now not the same person I was even five years ago, discovering new parts to me all the time, as I take back control. The secret for me is to keep looking, recording what I eat, and asking questions.

When I have too much of the chemicals that I react to (I can tolerate a bit more of the three natural chemicals now) the following happens: amines make me angry, like ODD. Salicylates (now) make me vague and panicky, uptight with others, because I can't think straight. Glutamates make me cry, uncontrollably sad. Synthetic antioxidants make me very anxious, but it's a build up effect. I didn't realise this for a long time, as I very rarely have too much of things like take away hot chips, until a recent long holiday. I also suspect soy and dairy as

having a build up effect on my mood, and must be totally gluten free. I only took out gluten about 1.5 years ago, as I still had some unexplained joint pain. Didn't realise it was connected with my moods, till I came off it and had severe withdrawals - headaches, depression, diarrhoea. On challenging it, I had severe depression, disconnection with reality, had trouble making my body respond to my brain, like I couldn't make a decision to move, and terrible anxiety. So even though I was doing very well on Failsafe and not gluten free, I'm doing even better off gluten. My body just doesn't want it back now, and I sure don't either! – by email, Vic

[805] Depression and preservatives (June 2009)

I do wonder if what mainstream media call the epidemic of depression is in fact an epidemic of food intolerances/sensitivities (or if I want to be more inflammatory, the poisoning of modern mankind!) And ADHD? I can only assume that a large proportion of children diagnosed with this in fact have the same kind of intolerances as our daughter.

When our 9 year old has consumed nitrates or other preservatives she becomes what I could only describe as deeply depressed, highly irritable, intolerant to noise and these days, self destructive. Any errors we have made in food the last months have led to her to:

- Attempt to jump off a balcony
- Scratch her nails deeply into her legs
- Bang her head on the refrigerator
- Threaten to kill her self.

No one who knows this child at school would believe that this is what we endure at home when she accidentally gets the wrong ingredients. Interestingly she will hold onto this behaviour at school and explode with it at home, if her diet has a hiccup earlier in the day.

Failsafers will know the rest of that story - tuck shop is off limits, birthday parties are a no no, all the other children in the family complain about the items (ice cream) that they can no longer have. - Amanda, by email

[678] 'Postnatal depression' due to fish oil capsules (September 2008)

I've recently noticed that I get really grumpy when taking a certain brand of super strength fish oil capsules. I started thinking I was suffering from post natal depression as I could feel the anger start inside me and build really fast and grow bigger. A bit hard to describe but I had never had this feeling before. I forgot to take them for a while which is what made me realise it was the capsules. - *Carole, by email*

[677] 'Postnatal depression' due to diet coke (September 2008)

I noticed that I have a dramatic reaction to diet coke. If I drink it, I get depressed and mood swings within 24 hours. So what we thought was emotion due to having bubs, was really the diet coke I was drinking as a pick-me-up due to lack of sleep. The challenge was eye opening. I did a benzoate challenge and was fine. I did another challenge with Diet Coke and the mood change is profound. The next day I was depressed, despondent and my husband said it was like turning off a light. – *by email*

[631] 'Incurable and medication resistant depression' due to milk (February 2008)

I have had depression since a late teen, which got worse with each of my pregnancies, to the point where after my youngest was born I was told by a leading post-natal depression psychiatrist that my depression was incurable and medication resistant. He said I would require weekly ECT (shock-therapy) treatments in order to lead a normal life. I said no and didn't see him again after that. Another doctor prescribed an anti-depressant

that I hadn't tried, which kept me alive. The milk allergy manifests in me as depression, mild to moderate oedema and headaches - not your usual allergy symptoms, which is why it wasn't diagnosed earlier. Without milk in my diet I suffer no depressive symptoms whatsoever and do not require any medication (and the associated side-effects). If not for your book, I would still be popping happy pills morning and night. – by email, Qld

[630] 'Depression - no need for Beyond Blue due to diet' (February 2008)

We did the elimination diet for my 13 month-old son (see story [634] Silent reflux, gastro, extreme nappy rash – months of needless medication). The other amazing thing is that after two weeks, my husband is a completely different man. He is no longer depressed, low, moody, disengaged, angry at everyone, abusive to himself (putting himself down). I had been on the verge of asking him to see a GP who is a specialist in beyond blue stuff but now there is no need. Since the diet, he is helpful as anything, has positive comments, is physically touching the kids so much more, is enthusiastic, has initiative and is just an all round changed man!!!! He can feel the difference himself as well. My mum has been blown away with his changed attitude to everyone. – Fiona, ACT

[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.

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

Replies to the question in newsletter #50 – “My almost 15 year old daughter who has had monthly cramps but no period for 4 years suddenly got her period. We have been on the elimination diet for 3 weeks. Is this a coincidence?”

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

Two years ago all my symptoms started again and six months ago I figured out why. I had gone back to work and was relying on prepackaged food a lot more where I always used make my own, and as a result my whole family suffered. My then six year old had all sorts of trouble emotionally and my then two year old turned into a

monster. My husband was diagnosed with irritable bowel and I had all my former problems including depression. Now thanks to a friend who recommended failsafe I am pleased to say we are now back on track and I can safely say that it is all down to food. We tried, through trial and error, all different sorts of treatments to help all our ailments, but simply changing our diet has helped us all. - by email

[534] Soy and depression 1 (January 2007)

Stories [534-532] are replies to the question newsletter #50: "my daughter has tried soymilk several times but it makes her depressed, intrusive, argumentative and very negative (feels the whole world is against her). She seems totally unaware of this occurring, even when pointed out. Is this a reaction you are aware of?"

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

[533] Soy and depression 2 (January 2007)

Just responding to question in newsletter #50 about depressive reactions to soy - my daughter reacts the same to cows' milk as to soy, even small amounts of soy in anything. Exactly as the question in the newsletter said, "it makes her depressed, intrusive, argumentative and very negative (feels the whole world is against her). She seems totally unaware of this occurring, even when pointed out". - reader, Vic

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

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

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

As usual doctors here were at a loss to explain these and claim them to be most probably fevers related to viruses. They suggested continued treatment as we do perhaps with paracetamol too keep it at bay. It was only after that I connected intake of soya beans 36 hours previously on the last occasions and I tested it with a very small intake which showed a minor reaction - still hallucinations but for a much milder and shorter period. Consequently soya beans are off our menu and I respect my son's taste buds when he refuses foods - he is usually allergic or intolerant of them. Allergy specialists here avoid giving soy milk to milk allergics as much as possible due to the close connection of the two allergies and the fact they believe soy allergies develop quicker in such cases. - reader, Sweden

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

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

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

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

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

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

I bought the video a few months back and have read much of the material on the website, and with what I now know about salicylates, amines, preservatives and additives of all kinds, it finally all makes sense! So far, my family and I have managed to stop the intake of preservatives and additives (That's the EASY part!) with noticeable improvements too, I might add, especially for my asthma! However, I have not completely recovered yet, and my eldest son - although improved - still has temper problems; so, over the last two days we have finally started tackling the salicylate/amine issue... It's harder I'll admit, BUT, I can already see definite positive-changes from my first-born son, and in my own well-being as well.

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

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

See update: [story \[1080\]](#)

[482] 635: Safeway marinated chicken "really thinking of offing myself" (January 2006)

On Thursday night my husband bought some marinated chicken at Safeway supermarket! I thought it tasted wonderful and really enjoyed it. Then the next day I woke up I looked like I had been bitten by some insects. I am allergic to insect bites so I didn't think anything of it. As the day went on it got worse I was at work and my whole legs broke out in the most severe itchy rash ever. I knew that there was something wrong the day before I went to beach I thought I was allergic to the salt water, when how could this be I've been to the beach my whole life.

By the time I got home from work, I was itching like crazy I put calamine lotion on it and it seemed to give me some relief, but it just kept on. At this stage I was worried I was alone, I thought I had caught a fatal disease like hepatitis or some thing, I was thinking suicidal thoughts, I suffer from depression and I was really thinking of offing myself, I tried to call family and friends no one was home. In desperation I went on the Internet to self diagnose myself. I typed in 'rash' in google not knowing what to look for. Your website came up at one of the top 10 searches. When I read the stories, some of them I could relate to but others I wasn't sure and still had some doubt. Then I thought back to the chicken, rang my husband he rang Safeway supermarket and they told him yes that it contained the flavour enhancer 635.

By the time my husband came home I had a rash everywhere over my body except my face - they were hives, some the size of 20 cent coins all over me big welts everywhere. I went the emergency department at Monash Medical Hospital in Melbourne, we talked the doctors and nurses about your website. I was at the emergency ward for three hours that night I was prescribed two medicines Promethazine hc1 (phenergan) Prednisolone (panafcortelone) an antihistamine and steroid. After two hours the welts and swelling began to calm down. I will be taking these medicines for the next three days.

Since suffering from this I am not buying any foods with additives in them. I am going to shop organic where ever possible. I have had to miss days of work before of this rash and I even contemplated suicide if it was for your website I don't know what I would have done, thank you so much – Rachel.

[459] Dealing with ex-husbands (November 2006) COURAGE AWARD STORY NOVEMBER 2006

Hi. I can already give you some feedback, as my 3 children and I have been on the elimination diet for 3 days. My eldest child is 14 (depression, asthma, sleeplessness, fatigue, restless legs, easily irritated, unmotivated etc): this morning she got out of bed without being nagged, had a shower without being told, all while smiling! I stopped taking antidepressants 2 weeks ago, and today for the first time since, I am not feeling my normal symptoms of depression. My youngest, 3, is hyperactive and today has been a lot calmer. He also normally wakes about 6am, and today slept in till 9:30!!! My elder son, 6, who has a learning delay, woke up teary and temperamental, as he was before bed last night, but he was at out-of-hours schoolcare yesterday and ate apple, cheese and yoghurt... One thing the book 'Fed up with children's behaviour' doesn't address is what to do when in a situation where I do not live with my ex-husband and he only sees the kids once a week, how do I get him to understand that the kids need to try this? He sees their issues as being 'normal' and although none of my kids are extreme in any way I want to give them the best life they can have, now and in the future. How do you convince people that relatively 'normal' kids still can benefit?

(later) thank you thank you! Despite all of my best efforts, my ex-husband is aggressively sabotaging my efforts with my children, constantly telling them that failsafe foods are 'silly' and if they ask for failsafe foods he gets cross at them. They spent one night at his house (Day 11 of the elim.diet) and he gave them everything he could think of that was on the list of 'Don'ts'. Consequently they came home silly. Neither of the boys (6 and 3) could get to sleep that night, the littlest one crying and rolling around in bed sobbing 'I can't stop, I can't stop'. In desperation I gave them both a half teaspoon of bi carb, thinking 'this isn't going to do anything' (I should know better!). As it tasted so awful I let them chase it with a Werther's. Within 10 minutes they were both asleep....- by email.

[436] Amines: depression and hangover (August 2006)

This father who was doing the elimination diet to support his son chose to do the amine challenge first because he thought he wouldn't react. 'How wrong can you get!' he wrote in his account of the challenge:

'I had a violent reaction within a few hours and have never felt so awful in all my life. Here are some of the

symptoms: depression, suicidal tendencies not just thoughts, melancholy, looking for an argument, feeling the whole world was against me, lethargy, shakes, pressure on the skull and tingles in the extremities, feeling of hangover, inability to focus on thoughts, ringing in the ears, inability to sleep. The hangover feeling lasted until the next day. Not the best 24 hours but at least I know there is a cause for symptoms that I have experienced in the past.'

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

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

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

After I had been on the diet for some years, I had another gastroscopy to investigate the possibility of coeliac sprue. This wasn't found (thank heavens) but it did demonstrate that the scarring and inflammation that had previously been there was now gone. The diet had resolved about 10 years of painful gastric symptoms for me.

I'm just wondering whether there might be other adults or children who have had the same experience. As people are so keen on physical evidence, maybe someone could pool the results and put out a paper? - reader, NSW

We would love to hear from any others with similar stories: please write to confoodnet@ozemail.com.au

[368] One liners (March 2005)

We could not believe the change in my 11 year old son's mood as a result of the diet – he was suffering from frequent feelings of depression, accompanied by episodes of weeping and rage at the same time and an anti-depressant was a disaster. After six months, depression is a thing of the past. – by email

[344] Depression: Chocolate was my drug of choice (Sept 2004)

The first time that I can remember having significant depression was my third year of varsity. At that stage I didn't do much about it, but I do know that good diets tend to go out the window at varsity – I was having a lot of fast foods and fizzy drinks. Whenever I was under stress my 'drug of choice' was chocolate. I was sure chocolate could get me through anything and could eat up to a block a day.

Somehow I finished my third and fourth years of varsity with good enough grades to get into a job that I thought that I should have.

I started my job about six months after finishing varsity into an environment that was full on learning and living. Through the first year of steep learning curves I found it more and more difficult to cope, I was crabby, had no self esteem and 'lost myself'. I couldn't concentrate, and therefore got more down on myself because I felt I wasn't doing well enough so started eating more and more chocolate and fast foods, which caused the cycle to continue, chocolate, stress, depression, lack of self worth ...

About a year into this I went to a doctor who said I would be fine, that I was just stressed out with preparing for our wedding, new job, change of city etc, basically to get on with it.

Three years later, I went to another doctor with the same symptoms, this time though I was put onto a 'minor' antidepressant. This did help to stabilise me, and I was able to make some decisions about where I was and where I wanted to go. I then changed jobs and felt much better, though saying that the much better as a comparative wasn't really still 'good'.

A year and a half ago my sister suggested that I try the failsafe diet for symptoms that my doctors were calling irritable bowel. I had gone off antidepressants for about six months before testing for IBS, but the first thing the doctors did when looking into my bowel problems was to put me back on antidepressants. During this time I had still been eating my old diet of chocolate, plus other foods that are high in amines.

So for my bowel reasons I went onto failsafe, cutting out everything including wheat and dairy.

This was very hard, and the withdrawal symptoms were awful, my husband put up with me yelling at him for no except that he wouldn't go and get me chocolate! At any time I transgressed, the withdrawal symptoms would come back.

Being on the diet showed many symptoms that we would have never had associated with food, for example, black rings under the eyes disappearing, lack of concentration leaving and a levelling of the depression that I had been experiencing. Before failsafe I never suspected that depression could even be related to food. I had decided that it ran in the family so I was just prone to it. After the diet, I suspected that amines were going to be the big one as whenever I ate cocoa based products I had always had either a major craving or it made everything seem worse.

During the amine testing, I think my husband just about divorced me. I felt awful, didn't want to get out of bed, couldn't be bothered with anything and was sure everyone hated me. Anything anyone said was taken the wrong way and I nearly chucked in the job that I sometimes really enjoy. I spent hours telling my husband about how terrible my life was and analysing everything in detail trying to work out why everyone hated me. I had an increasing intensity in suicidal thoughts, thinking through what was in the house to help me, though, thank goodness, never got to the stage of actually doing anything about it. It was scary!!!

Dairy had also shown an affect on my moods, making me grumpy when I consumed too much, though grumpy, I wasn't as bad as on amines to live with.

I am still on the antidepressants, but know that I don't really need them. When I am doing diet wrong, the antidepressants don't help, but they are effectively a crutch that I haven't been game enough to get off.

When I am staying strictly on failsafe, I feel happier, am nicer to be around, enjoy life and have lots of energy instead of lying on the couch like a half comatose couch potato.- Reader, NZ

[343] Depression: Female hormones and depression (Sept 2004)

I always had horrible periods. I was a chronic bitch for two weeks out of every month and also suffered severe cramping with heavy bleeding and frequent clots.

Straight after my son's birth I knew something was wrong. When I got home I just sat in bed staring into space. I couldn't get out of bed, couldn't do anything, couldn't sleep. I would start panicking when I heard the baby cry.

My mother had to come and look after us, doing all the work and bringing my son to me for feeds. It was awful. I didn't want to take antidepressants but it was something I had to do to make myself better.

After my second child was born the same thing happened but I went on the diet for her eczema when she was 4 months old and it really helped me, I felt better than I had for months. Then when I weaned her I went back on my normal diet and started feeling anxious and overwhelmed and I couldn't sleep even though I was on antidepressants. I know I should have realised I needed to go on the diet again but I was in denial. It all seemed too hard. For me giving up chocolate was a really big thing. I had to decide that feeling good was more important than being able to eat chocolate when I was stressed.

After my daughter was born, I took antidepressants for 12 months, then I spent 18 months weaning myself off them very slowly, because if I went any faster I had withdrawal symptoms. During this time I went on the elimination diet for myself. My PMS, other menstrual problems and depression all disappeared. Challenges showed that I am sensitive to nearly everything. If someone had told me when I first got postnatal depression that my problems were due to food intolerance, I would have gone on the diet straight away. I've been on this diet for months and now I can't really remember what it's like to be depressed.' - reader, ACT

[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

[341] Depression: A young child with a 'highly anxious temperament' (Sept 2004)

Pre-failsafe, my eight year old daughter was mildly depressed, as well as lethargic, pale, anxious, dizzy and "spacy". Her amine challenge resulted in severe depression including bouts of suicidal thoughts and almost psychotic agitation. Based on pre-diet behaviours, she was classified as having a highly anxious temperament. A number of health professionals have told us they expect to see her back during her teenage years, meaning so they can give her antidepressants. However after two years failsafe she shows no signs of mental illness in any form and no longer seems a candidate for anxiety and depression.

I am only mildly food intolerant but an overdose of amines can give me the blues. My husband is moderately food intolerant and can get dark moods and negative thinking from amines. However neither of us have ever had full blown depression. - reader, Tas

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

After the birth of my first son I was diagnosed with post natal depression (PND) and had a few months on an antidepressant (Seroxat).

I was soon pregnant with my second son and while pregnant avoided alcohol (this later turned out to be important). During both pregnancies I ate well, although not failsafe, and felt great.

After my second son was born I was again diagnosed with PND and went back on Seroxat and I was on varying doses of that or similar medication altogether for 6 years. I needed them and they helped me. I could not have coped the first three years with all the stress going on in our lives.

My second son had been a very sick baby, I was stressed with him and an overactive toddler, and when things did balance out for the boys – when we went failsafe – we had a big move and I had a huge amount of stress again with that life change.

In addition, I visited psychologists on a regular basis, had light therapy, and tried other sorts of complementary therapies such as vitamins and herbal therapies but nothing that "replaced" the medication. All helped in various ways at different stages, particularly the first two.

Then eighteen months ago I went totally FAILSAFE and regained my life! I felt like the "old me", pre-children me was back. I had energy, wasn't continually tired, didn't have continual body aches, headaches and wasn't depressed. I didn't "need" red wine and cheese comforts (amines overloads, not to mention other preservatives). After about 5 years of lacking normal energy, and being down, this was and is cause for celebration.

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

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

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

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

I have now weaned myself off the tablets totally after taking them for six years. The medication really just masked the problem, it evened out my emotional highs and lows and made it possible to survive by avoiding the deep lows that threatened my life's worthiness.

Over 5 months I weaned myself successfully from two daily capsules to one capsule every other day. First I tried "cold turkey" - which I don't recommend to anyone - but gave up by the fourth day due to dizziness and inability to focus, as well as nausea and more. Over winter I maintained one every second day (every day date divisible by two) and when spring came, extended the medication free days in-between until I was up to one tablet every 7 days. I missed one and then found I didn't notice and haven't taken one since. Despite another stressful period I have entered recently, I am managing well so long as I keep failsafe. - Reader, Europe

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

I just want to give you my personal thanks for everything you have done, with the website and the books. I have only come across this 8 wks ago and we have had some significant changes already.

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 the failsafe 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. Your book was my constant companion and the website was invaluable for the shopping list etc.

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. - Sue, NSW

[285] Weighing in at nearly 100 kgs ... sleeve loaded with tissues (September 2003)

I would like to share a recent discovery which happened because of your checklist. Three years ago I started the RPAH elimination diet, with chronic urticaria, asthma and depression, weighing in at nearly 100kgs and only 26 years old. I had to change to live. Immediately I stopped smoking and drinking and discovered after 2 days of elimination I was suffering dairy intolerance and now stay right away from all dairy products. Within 12 months I had lost 30kgs and never felt better in my life. After six months of dairy-free life, I got married - I recommend love also as a wonderful healer. I took up yoga and greatly increased my exercise. 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'.

Having relaxed my eating and decreased my exercise, I regained a dress size or two over the last 12 months and recently decided enough was enough. I was becoming uncomfortable and depressed again and couldn't fit into my gorgeous new clothes. I could see I was starting to walk down that old path which led to unhappiness. I now hold the knowledge and power to change. There is no need to get sucked into old habits from the past. It was time to return to chemical free life which I recalled with so much joy ... 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 three 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 caused 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! My teeth actually feel cleaner than when using regular toothpaste and with a chemical free diet I never have a problem with bad breath which needs to be covered up with peppermint. - reader, Sydney

[260] CFS and failsafe (June 2003)

A bad case of Glandular Fever triggered my CFS, which resulted in two miserable years of bouncing from one medical practitioner to another trying western medicine and other alternatives such as acupuncture. The responses were often unsympathetic and showed a complete lack of understanding about the condition.

It was through a recommendation from the CFS society in Melbourne that I saw a failsafe allergist.

It took nearly three months on a very strict elimination diet before I felt my old self again and the glands in my neck no longer felt like golf balls. It wasn't long after the three months that I was back working in the outdoors. With hindsight the recovery was remarkable after spending so long with little to no energy.

The nature of my work made it very difficult for me to effectively reintroduce all foods so I am still unsure of all

the chemicals that affect me. However, MSG is a shocker!! as are most preservatives. When I start feeling the CFS symptoms coming back I put myself back on failsafe.

Despite a careful diet I still need more sleep than most people (9 - 10 hours a night) to function effectively. I rarely drink alcohol, this makes the CFS symptoms worse and I seem to be very sensitive to strong smells such as deodorant and perfume. I definitely feel better when living outdoors.

Without a doubt, going failsafe saved me from years of depression and frustration. I never take my good health for granted after being so deprived of the lifestyle I love. - Amanda, Melbourne

[230] I felt I had a potential psychopath on my hands (February 2003)

I am 42 and live in Sydney with my husband and 2 children. My story centres around my son, Alex who is now 6 years old. Alex is a little toughy, one of those kids who is highspeed, enthusiastic, in your face, adventuresome etc (and that's with a positive spin on his life).

He was born 2 weeks early, but a big boofy boy at 4kg. For the first 6 months he was a wonderfully placid calm child. Feed well, slept well, grew well, didn't seem to cry - dream baby. (Apart from having chicken pox, bronchiolitis and 2 fits in this period he was healthy and strong - though perhaps these illness should have given me a clue).

At six months he suddenly became incredibly restless - people would comment on him being active and a real 'tiger' - Looking back 3 things changed at this time - he started solids, started formula and he started daycare. I also remember noticing his face change. He had had a beautiful round baby face with bright blue eyes, and when he started on solids he got dark circles and creases under the eyes, and his eyes turned green - I remember crying at the loss of my beautiful baby boy.

His first year in day care was diabolical. In a class of 15 babies, with 4 carers they could not cope with Alex. He walked at 9 months and spent his time running around the other babies (that were still immobile) snatching toys, jumping on the babies, shrieking, and escaping - he seemed incredibly bright and had the mobility of a child at least 6 months older. Every evening I was met with the litany of what he had done that day to terrorise the class. The carers always looked frazzled and worn out. Their only solution was to give continuous time out as a punishment - he spent hours every day in a cot that he eventually broke - at the time I lived through it thinking it must get better - in hindsight I see their approach as completely inappropriate - he was too young to be punished - it didn't help to modify his behavior, rather it set it in stone.

He continued through daycare being rough and ready, and some days violent - he found their order and routine hard to take. When he wanted to run in the garden, he had to listen to the story, when he wanted to keep painting, he was told painting time was finished - the structure and lack of freedom drove him mad. And this was a university based childcare with great facilities and high staff to student numbers!!

Our life at home was crazy as well. It was like living with Jekyll and Hyde. Sometimes he would be a delight, other days he would be totally uncontrollable - usually incredibly defiant - he could stick to his point hour in hour out - it was impossible to win an argument - normal parenting didn't seem to work. He also had a habit of making loud repetitive noises.

Going out was a nightmare - he would run away, run into traffic, swear at strangers, try to strangle other children, and on a really bad day would threaten to kill people. There were many times when I felt that I had a potential psychopath or serial killer on my hands. Another characteristic was that he couldn't be told anything - he always wanted to learn first hand.

Harm minimisation seemed to be the best policy - I taught him to cook, use knives safely, chop wood with an axe, use power tools etc at a very young age - on the basis that he was going to find and use these items anyway, no matter what I did to try and stop him. Although he had a few accidents (mainly burns from cooking) this strategy has meant that he is still alive.

At 3 we discovered he had asthma, and glue ear - he had his first set of grommets inserted and could finally hear. At that stage I thought the hearing was the answer to all his behavioral problems, and I am sure he must have felt better being able to hear (Since then we have had another 3 sets of grommets inserted). He also changed to a community based, child centred pre-school/school which was far better for him. They worked with what he wanted to do and let him learn and explore at his own pace. The other children were attracted to him in an odd way - they were always excited to see what daring deed or brilliant idea he had - he never lacked for incredible ideas or enthusiasm. Despite this, successful social interaction and aggression was still an issue, and friendships were dicey due to his unpredictability.

Another habit he had was ticcing - eye tics, snorting, touching other children, kicking - At 4 he was diagnosed with Tourettes by a paediatrician. (I followed up later with a neurologist who specialised in Tourettes who said that he was just a naughty boy who needed counselling).

I was also seeing the local health centre psychologist -but this seemed to be no more than a chance for me to talk - never really got to address Alex's needs.

Interestingly I found his behavior was always better in winter, and was diabolical by term 4 (I now think this is fruit related!).

By the end of pre-school several parents had started a petition to get him removed from the school - luckily I had the support of the teachers and many other parents and this was stopped dead in its tracks.

I noticed that there were several different levels to his behavior - what I think of as 'full on' and then 'psycho'. I noticed that he became psycho after certain drinks - being sceptical about colour related behavior I started to read the labels whenever he went truly demented and psychotic - of course you can guess what I found - 102 At the time I had no idea that other people knew it was bad - I just thought I had the only child in the world who reacted to yellow colour - particularly as the popular wisdom of the day all said that red colour was the problem. So for the last 2 years I have avoided 102 - this helped a bit - but not totally.

The local health centre's counsellor visited the school and reported that his behavior was Oppositional Defiant - first time I had ever heard of it. The solution was to maximise his 'good interactions' - so once again no real help, and leaving it up to me to be a better parent.

Alex started school at the same child-centred preschool/school last year - he had a reasonably good year but was chronically sick - temperatures, stomach aches, headaches. However as he is so hyperactive, he often didn't realise he was sick, and I had to fight to get doctors to look at him. For example, I took him to hospital with severe asthma/croup - however as he was running around casualty making chicken noises he was not seen to as a priority case - when they finally looked at him, his oxygen levels were dangerously low and he was gasping for breath.

Another time we sat in a waiting room, left till last as he was jumping on chairs (and apparently well) - when he was finally seen the doctor couldn't believe he was racing around - his temperature was 41 and he had acute tonsillitis and a ear infection. He also had a severe salmonella infection last year and was losing considerable quantities of blood, but because of his high energy levels I was told it was just gastro and I was exaggerating his symptoms - it was finally diagnosed as salmonella and he had 2 weeks off recovering - I now know that when Alex is sick I have to force doctors to look for the worst. While I know he is ill, to anyone else he seems too full

of beans to be sick - time and time again the doctors have been surprised when some odd illness turns up (ie scarlet fever, pneumonia, bronchiolitis, to name just a few).

At the end of last year I took Alex to yet another pediatrician - this time about his health - after a year of infections and unexplained temperatures I was thinking that there was something seriously wrong - he took his medical history and noted his pallor, and dark circles under his eyes - and pronounced food intolerance!!!

In December I started him on the diet given to me by this doctor - we removed milk, honey, colours and preservatives - and were told he could eat fruit, vegies and only cold pressed oil.

So - no result - if anything he became worse. While I thank this doctor for pointing me in the direction of food intolerance, his diet did nothing to help. A family friend recommended your cookbook to my mum. Since then I have spent the holidays reading Fed Up, and the cookbook and going failsafe.

We have cut out diary, amines, salicylates, and all the artificial additives, colours, preservatives etc. My mum has been a fantastic support. She is making all the 'extras' ie: jams, mayonaise, biscuits etc. Without her I couldn't have achieved so much. She also rings up food companies and asks them to clarify what their ingredients are, and what type of oil they are using! We haven't taken out gluten yet - not sure whether it is necessary.

And Alex? It has taken a while, but by the end of the holiday he was so much better. He was able to play consistently with children without it erupting into a major argument. Parents and friends have noticed the difference. I have also noticed that he is now able to be disciplined. He can hear what I am saying and understands when his behavior is wrong and I can now win an argument.

Last week was the first week back at school - first day was fantastic and I received lots of comment about how he changed. Then he started cheating and eating roll ups, muesli bars, chocolate cake and sweets from his friends - by the weekend he was making repetitive noises, chatting constantly, being selfish, crying and was unable to control himself. He visited a friend on the weekend, who had seen him a week before in his good phase, and she couldn't believe the difference - she is now a convert to the idea of food intolerance. In her words it is like he is on a drug trip, and we all just have to wait for him to come 'down'.

So we are back trying to get him adhering to his diet again - he says he wants to - I just have to wait and see. I want to get him back to the point where we can try some controlled challenges!

And the rest of the family? None of us are totally failsafe yet, and are all cheating when we are out, but I believe we all have symptoms that warrant the diet. My 9 yr old daughter is incredibly artistic, but unable to read, and has temper tantrums, I suffer migraines, mood swings, arthritis and occasional depression. Interestingly, my daughter did some market research for a new hyper flavoured snack food a few weeks ago. She came home in an uncontrollable rage to the point that she was throwing herself around the house kicking furniture etc. I have never seen her like that before - and just think, those snacks are about to do that to all our kids - it's criminal. - reader, Sydney

[156] Unexplained fatigue, dizziness (June 2002)

We are doing the elimination diet to try and help my oldest daughter.. She is 8 years old. Her main problem is that she has suffered from regular, unexplained and excessive fatigue for several years. We have also recently realised that she suffers a lot of dizziness and light headedness too. She has good days and bad days, as well as long good stretches and bad stretches of 1 - 4 weeks. When bad she can miss quite a lot of school, hates getting up in the morning, hates school, and spends all the after school period on the couch, until bedtime. Other

symptoms which bother her are periods of excessive irritability, difficulty getting to sleep at night, being very sluggish in the mornings, difficulty focusing and applying herself, daydreaming and being slow to get anything done, being very pale in the face at times, fainting (at sight of blood), periods which seem like depression, and at times, poor appetite and feeling of nausea after eating. It was only after thinking through everything written in Fed Up that I realised she had so many symptoms. These things have become apparent gradually since she started school, but seem to be trending to get worse. On the plus side, she is very clever, has always put in a big effort at school and is consistently a very high achiever, is well behaved, patient, sensitive, thoughtful, kind, and hardly ever gets into trouble. In fact, one teacher thought she was "too good" - which could make it hard for her to stand up for her own needs.

She has had blood tests a few times, which found nothing, but she is absolutely terrified of medical procedures (and will faint) so we have chosen to explore dietary options. We are in the second week of our elimination diet, it has been very interesting. I think I believed nothing would happen. We took ages to get ready (mentally and in terms of stocking the pantry) so we were additive free for a month or so before starting. During this time she was gradually improving but nothing drastic. On day 3 and 4 of elimination she "lost it" - picked fights, became over emotional, almost hysterical, restless, teary, irrational, and claimed we were all against her. I was a bit scared as this was not in the least her normal behaviour. She also had some nausea. However thankfully these withdrawals eased off by day 5. The first improvement she noticed was that she didn't feel irritable any more. Then she started to say she had more energy. She has clearly been getting more involved in activities and spending much less time on the couch. She has been focused enough to do good piano practice, and she has stopped saying she hates school. - by email

[155] A Brush with Pizza Snack Biscuits (June 2002)

My sons are severely food and chemical intolerant. Their diets are severely restricted, just to enable them to cope with day to day life. Their adherence to the restricted diet literally enables them to survive. We avoid additives in food at all costs, and we avoid chemicals wherever possible as they affect the boys equally to the wrong food choices. They are aged 6 and 3.

My eldest son has commenced school and is in Year 1. Considering his dietary challenges, he copes with food and school incredibly well – but there have been and will always be the occasional slip ups. Pressure from peers is already impacting and will continue to do so as he journeys towards adulthood.

Late in the Kindergarten year, he was with some team mates after a Teeball game. He was eating his customary rice and drinking plain water whilst the other kids were tucking into soft drink and a box of pizza snack biscuits – the kind people might eat with dip. He was fairly unfazed as he is used to it, but the problem kicked in when he had finished – still hungry - and the others still had plenty to eat. He resisted their offering and the temptation to indulge until they reached the bottom of the box. It was then that he succumbed to the hunger and I daresay, the curiosity, (he has never eaten them before!) and he ate some crumbs from the box – less than would cover a 10 cent piece. He later remarked that he didn't even like how they tasted!

Within 3 hours, the reaction started. He was due to go to a birthday party – I always stay with him for moral support because he can't indulge in what others enjoy at parties – and as we arrived, the rot began to set in! He was no longer able to communicate with me in the way he usually would. His responses to questions were more a grunt than a reply. I had to physically manipulate his face to make eye contact with him and get his attention – and his eyes were wild!

He generally perspires freely even though he is only 6, but now he was perspiring profusely. His shirt, hat and shorts looked like the ones on Pat Rafter after a 5 set Final – and this is truly without exaggeration. He was

soaked. He was moving in an agitated manner- his actions were jerky rather than smooth, and he was lashing out at things and people. He became surly and very defiant. He was irrational when compared to his usual behaviours. He hurt 4 friends at the party in 4 separate incidents whilst playing tips on and around some playground equipment. I had been observing and intervening – there was nothing malicious, but he had lost his finesse and the ability to be able to judge the other kids level of involvement. He had become face blind – oblivious to their anxiety and distress, and unable to see that they wished to cease the game. His need to continue the game was insatiable.

For the first time ever, these kids were actually scared of him and what he was doing, and they thought he had hurt them on purpose. He was at this point doing some real damage to the fragile relationships he had worked so hard to develop. The area the party was conducted in was also open to the public, and my son managed to get into 3 fights with slightly older boys he had never met before. In each instance, both parties were equally at fault, however the new children seemed to take an instant dislike to his overall behaviour and this was the impetus for the conflict. He was now unable to make good judgements about his actions and he took offence at the situation. Instead of altering his behaviours to become more socially acceptable, he lashed out and hit the other child – and so the fights began. My time was spent alternating between apologising to everyone profusely, heading his ill-considered choices off at the pass and repairing his crumbling relationships whilst helping out his inadvertent victims – his mates were suffering his horrendous reaction to flavour enhancers, flavours and preservatives vicariously.

Going home was no better – we were only two hours into the reaction and things weren't going to get better in a hurry. I tried to keep him doing things outside to wear off as much energy as I could. Something happened and he was hurt. I think he took a bump on a tooth that was threatening to come out, but was nowhere near ready just yet. The bump made the tooth a little looser and it bled. I tried to soothe him and clean the blood without his knowledge, as blood worries him. It was no use because he became hysterical. His hysteria was very different to his usual teary fussing (as many 6 year olds do when in need of TLC). He began to scream and squeal a very high pitched squeal, he was rocking and flapping, he was panicking, he wanted comfort but kept pushing me away and he interspersed the screams and squeals with frenetic pleas of 'Help me! Help me!' He was inconsolable and it took me more than 1 ½ hours to calm him down to a reasonable state. He then continued to rock and sob on my lap.

Without the pizza shape irritants in his body, I would have been able to calm him right down within half an hour and he would not have exhibited the rocking, flapping and squealing behaviours (which are found on the Autism Spectrum along with face blindness and tactile defensivity – not wanting his personal space invaded, oversensitivity to touch, pushing me away despite wanting comfort). He also would not have pushed me away after the initial pain subsided. Consequently, he distressed his baby brother and his father – the whole house had been disrupted by the ingestion of the miniscule dose of pizza shapes only hours earlier.

The next phase of the reaction involved him not being able to go to sleep, and then once finally asleep, waking all through the night. He finally succumbed to sleep at 11.30pm after his usual Catapres dose and some Panadol several hours earlier. His body was still too irritated to properly settle down. Massage was useless because now he was oversensitive to touch. Whilst asleep, he did not lie still all night. He was thumping, wriggling, tossing and squirming all night. You could not say he had a restful evening and neither did we.

He was awake at about 6 am despite his late and unsettled night and the irritated, angry behaviours commenced immediately. He had an argument with his brother over the TV that ended in a fight, because he couldn't step back and get help to sort it out without using his hands and body. He was physically and verbally aggressive and violent. His defiance was escalating and every single thing that went on in the day was a bone of contention. If we said it was black, he swore that it was white despite any evidence to the contrary. If his brother looked at one of his toys, or dared go near his bedroom door, then he hit him without even blinking. I

spent this day diverting, refereeing and taking my son out of the house to separate everyone and try to reduce the exponentially increasing stress levels. Bedtime was no better tonight either.

He also began to exhibit physical symptoms today. He now had patches of eczema under his armpits – these only ever appear when he is reacting to something – he had a pre eczema scale – like ichthyosis - all over his torso that he constantly scratched at. He had heartburn, his belching increased, he had wind that you could hear in his digestive tract, he had ‘allergic shiners’ (large dark circles under his eyes), he had greyish skin tone, he had a red burn mark with skin peeling off his behind from the irritants passing through his digestive tract and burning him as it went. There was nothing I could use to relieve his discomfort as nothing would stay on his skin. These physical symptoms would remain until his body was finally clear of what he had ingested.

Upon waking the following day, it was still evident that the aggression was present, although a little milder than yesterday. I managed to encourage him to have some solitary play in his room. He was still irrational and oversensitive and not coping and lashing out. By the time school began, he was in tears clinging to my legs. He was suffering terrific mood swings and his anxiety levels had really increased – he becomes very anxious when his body is compromised by the wrong foods or chemicals and this directly affects his behaviours too. I let his teacher know and organised to collect him early as I knew a whole day of school would be too much. His ability to perform his work had significantly decreased compared to the week before and he needed much more support to complete tasks. His behaviours in the playground were more frenetic and wild, but fortunately he didn't get into any scrapes that might be finished physically.

In the afternoon, he exploded again – tiredness and the pizza shapes a volatile combination. I rode a rollercoaster of violence, verbal abuse, screaming, aggression, hugs and apologies. It was all I could do to get the situation calm enough for us all to co-exist when Dad got home from work. Unsettled sleep was still an issue. This pattern of morning irritation, school, early pickup, irrationality, abuse and calm continued for another 6 days before things significantly improved. It was a hell of a long time to suffer for such a piddling amount of additive laden Pizza biscuits! Another unfortunate feature that reared its ugly head during this horror period was a return to very negative self image; calling himself stupid and an idiot, saying and believing that no-one liked him and no-one loved him, and believing that his friends didn't like him anymore either. When he has a reaction like this, he believes he is not a good person. This is a very heavy burden for such a small person, but it has been a part of his reaction pattern since he began to speak. When he was eating a lot more foods when very small - before we had pinpointed the problem (and life was hell for everyone), he would sometimes self harm and sometimes even say ‘I wish I was dead’. It is a very scary and affronting thing to hear your two year old say, "I'm a yucky person! I wish I was dead!"

I always take great pains to point out the wonderful things about him and his achievements and I try to provide lots of situations where he will feel success, but it is undermined very quickly when something like the pizza biscuit incident occurs.

Oh, and what additives were in the box? A combination of at least four glutamate flavour enhancers, some colours, added flavours, vegetable fat (that is likely to contain one of the harmful antioxidants but which doesn't have to be listed because it represents less than 10 percent of the final product), cheese powder (also usually has added flavour enhancer in the manufacturing), spices... I think anyone reading this will get the picture!

What can be learned from this horrible but true story?

- Food additives DO hurt children.
- Food additives vicariously affect others.

- Possible reactions are many and varied. If you're lucky, you may only exhibit a few minor irritations. If you are unlucky, it will affect your whole life until you can overcome the dosage.
- Physical, mental, social and emotional health can be affected equally.
- Reactions are dose related. The more you have, the more likely you are to suffer a reaction.
- Reactions are individual, and depend on your tolerance.
- Society eventually pays for the individuals who cannot cope with the additives in their diet but are not aware of the connection: mental illness, conduct disorder, depression, drug dependency, costly and often ineffective medication to treat a sufferer's great variety of symptoms, property damage, incidents of rage, family and relationship breakdown, compensation paid to people who end up the innocent victims of others who themselves are really the victims of the food industry... All of this has a cost, whether just an emotional one, or a monetary one. Incarceration of food 'victims' is yet another cost – and one better spent in prevention and better health outcomes for all.

Many of the additives now permitted for use in our foods were not permitted as recently as 5 years ago. If we didn't need them in our food then, and they can have a harmful effect on children and adults alike, then WHY are we allowing them into our food now?! - Sheryl, ACT

[115] Depression etc (August 2001)

For the past 15 years I have been unable to eat wheat, preservatives or MSG - or suffer the consequences if I do. A life spent suffering headaches, depression, lethargy and other sundry aches and pains is no alternative to avoiding the wrong foods and being able to live life to the full! - by email

[103] World war three (August 2001)

"I contacted a dietitian through the Base hospital and with their help we managed to get through the Elimination Diet. ... We both reacted to amines and our symptoms were the same and severe - aggressive behaviour with a lack of self-control, depression etc. It was like world war three in our house by the end of the week and both of us took at least a week to recover ... I remember a quote in "Fed Up" from a lady who said she spent more time in the kitchen but less time disciplining the children and I have found that to be absolutely true ... we have come a long way in these last (we are searching for the end of this story!)

[101] "What an experience that was! - irritable bowel, sneaky poos, restless legs, eczema, behaviour" (August 2001)

I contacted a dietitian through our Base hospital and with their help we managed to get through the Elimination Diet. What an experience that was! My youngest son, Tim, who is three in April, had been given an uncertain diagnosis of "Irritable Bowel???" by the pediatrician. We were told to take him off lactose, sugar and soy and reduce the fruit intake. That has little effect on his symptoms. So, Brandon (5 yo), Tim and I embarked on the Elimination Diet. My husband did not want to be involved in the "witchcraft" as he called it!

I was on the phone to the dietitian after 36 hours because Brandon, who had behaviour problems, had got 10 times worse where behaviour was concerned and had come out in an eczema-type rash on his torso and upper arms. I felt he was reacting to the soy or the cashew paste (but probably the soy) as these were the only new additions to our diet. I was told to "persevere, that reactions usually got worse before they improved". After 5

days I had a great improvement in my mucous volume and felt better than I had in 5 years. After 4 weeks we had seen limited improvement in Brandon's behaviour and no improvement in Tim's symptoms so decided to eliminate wheat as well.

The results were quite amazing. After 2 weeks off wheat I realized my restless legs were no longer worrying me and Brandon's sneaky poos had ceased to be a problem. Tim's symptoms improved but his bowel motions never really came back to normal. We did the wheat challenge first. Brandon was OK for 5 days but on the 6th day he obviously went over the threshold and took a full week to recover. He reacted with restless legs (which I have since discovered can happen after even a few cracker biscuits) and Tim also had a worsening of his diarrhea.

The dairy challenge was interesting - my mucous symptoms were worse but Brandon improved in behaviour almost overnight and after 3 days the eczema was gone! So I was right about the soy after all.

... Brandon reacted to salicylates as I suspected he would, I didn't. The amine challenge was a disaster! We should never both have done that at the same time. Brandon and I both reacted and our symptoms were the same and severe - aggressive behaviour with a lack of self-control, depression etc. It was like world war three in our house by the end of the week and both of us took at least a week to recover. I have read in a number of places that if we react to amines then we probably react to other additives so we have not continued with separate challenges for these. We just avoid them.

Initially I was daunted by the difficulties I faced accessing the foods we need but eventually as I learn where in the supermarket, health food store etc to find things life has become much easier ... I remember a quote in "Fed Up" from a lady who said she spent more time in the kitchen but less time disciplining the children and I have found that to be absolutely true. It is now just the way we live. I find the most difficult thing now is other people's reactions to our diet. Some of our friends though come to our place with 7UP and kettle chips to share. Thankfully my husband is now more supportive and even grudgingly admits that he is probably reacting to some foods himself. So, Sue we have come a long way in these last 6 months. I hope it makes you proud to know that your writing of "Fed Up" has contributed to such an improvement in our lives. - Qld

[042] "a few lives and a lot of sanity" (May 2000)

I have a family, both maternally and paternally, of very happy, giving people who are easily angered, overreactive, bored, fidgety, highly strung or vague. I also have a history of either myself or a relative with asthma, sinusitis, rhinitis, excess mucous, eczema, hives, itchy crawly skin, headaches, migraines, lethargy, anxiety attacks, depression, colic, reflux, stomach aches, bloating, wind, dyslexia, food reactions, mouth ulcers, bedwetting and growing pains. What chance did I or my son have in missing out on food allergies and intolerances? It is a shame that we didn't know the links between all of these symptoms and food intolerances. There have been two suicides and one diagnosed schizophrenic who tried many times to take his own life. I read your book as soon as I could get my hands on it. If only my family had been aware of these things years ago there may have been a few lives saved as well as a lot of sanity! - Reader, NSW

[1115] PDD, ADHD, anxiety disorder, borderline anorexia nervosa (July 2012)

I happened upon your site late last year while searching for help for my eldest son who was diagnosed with PDD, ADHD, anxiety disorder and high level language disorder as well as bordering on anorexia nervosa all at the ripe old age of 10. Doctors were not helping and all the drugs they threw at us weren't helping either. I was at a loss as to how to help him as his behaviour escalated out of control and my husband and I nearly split up because of the stress on both of us. It was a nightmare trying to manage all his problems as well as look after our other three children. His behaviour was so extreme that I didn't think diet could help but remembering that

I was a Feingold kid for many years myself I figured it certainly couldn't hurt and I had been only too willing to make him take drugs because it was an "easy" option that didn't require a lot of effort on our part.

We started FS in January before school went back and now only a couple of months later my son looks and acts like a "normal" child. We have had easily an 80% improvement in his behaviour, autism symptoms and mood. I say only 80% because I'm still fumbling to get the diet right for him because he seems to be sensitive to just about everything and he is living on the elimination diet at the moment. It's a sharp learning curve though and we pay dearly for mistakes with a slide back into his worst behaviour and autistic traits within half an hour usually and the effects can last for days.

Thank you so much for the work you and your husband are doing for families like ours. by email, Qld

[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

[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

[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

[952] Australia has more preservatives than Britain (October 2010)

I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your guidance on food additives. I noticed a while back, when we were living in Scotland that my daughter (aged 3) reacted to salicylates. I found some information about Dr Feingold's work and kept fruit etc to a minimum. It was only after we moved to Australia that I noticed a big change in her (anxiety, defiance, restlessness, night waking, loud silly noises, aggression towards her brother). We blamed it on the move, a new baby brother etc. But we had no real idea as to what was causing it until we found your website and realised both cream cheese and bread in Australia have preservatives! We never had this problem in the UK so I didn't realise dishing up cream cheese sandwiches (my daughter's favourite) would cause us all such bother! I do hope some changes can be made here in Australia. We are only two weeks into our changed diet and the difference is astounding! - Emma, WA (Australian regulators say we have a higher permitted level of preservatives because of our hot climate - S)

[948] Red ears in a baby a common sign of food intolerance (October 2010)

My first child was what some would call a colicky baby. There seemed no pattern, and sometimes nothing I did would settle him. When he was distressed nursing helped, but he was restless, pulling off the breast after a few minutes. In fact he snacked all day and night, rather than taking full feeds. My midwife suggested that something could be going through my milk which disagreed with him, and I stopped eating dairy, citrus and onions for a while, but to no effect. I asked many people about an odd thing – when he fed, he often got one red ear. No-one knew what it was or thought it important.

By six months his distress had settled down, though he remained an anxious baby and toddler (a friend described him as a 'whiny baby'). At 18 months he became very ill with gastroenteritis. From this time on he was never the same. His anxiety increased, he'd have what seemed like panic attacks, clinging to me with a highpitched squeal and a bewildered little face. He kept getting red ears, one or the other or both, flushed cheeks, and red lips. Yet at other times he seemed fine. (It took another 3 years for this mother to discover that food intolerance was the cause of her baby's problems...) His symptoms changed as he got older, but now we know his main triggers, he is well most of the time. Looking back, we could have been saved all of this if someone had been able to tell us that red ears are a common sign of food intolerance. So are colic, night restlessness, anxiety, panic attacks, mouth discomfort and the desire to suck vigorously and many more symptoms he displayed. – Jan, from

http://www.lalecheleague.org.nz/template/articles_information/food_intolerances.pdf

[914] Extreme irritability, moodiness, anxiety, nightmares, night waking due to diet (June 2010)

I have an 8-year-old daughter, who I put on the failsafe eating when she was 6 due to extreme irritability, moodiness, anxiety, nightmares, night waking etc. It worked amazingly within 2 weeks. We had our little girl back, she was so much calmer, compliant, more focused and so much nicer to be around. Even her teacher at the time said "I have never seen a result like that without drugs". She seems to react to many things, however, salicylates, amines and glutamates are the main culprits. – Jane, by email

[861] 6yo saved from ADHD medication (November 2009)

I would just like to thank you for saving us from having to put my nearly 6 year old daughter on ADHD medication!!

I was already known as the food nazi mum, and Lilly wasn't allowed any preservatives, flavour enhancers or artificial colours, but all too often I was seeing behaviour that I knew was a reaction to additives - I just couldn't work out what!!! Life in our house was hell most of the time, and I was days away from taking her to our GP to get it sorted. A friend suggested reading Fed Up, which I've looked at your website many times in the past but didn't know where to start - the idea of cutting more food seriously caused me so much anxiety that I just couldn't do it.

I only had to read a couple of pages to realize that Lilly's diet was REALLY high in foods naturally high in glutamates and bad antioxidants - I knew how badly she reacted to MSG, so I cut those foods right back (her lunchbox used to have a tasty cheese and Ourmate sandwich plus a little tub of cherry tomatoes, then a dinner of Nonna's tomato/mushroom pasta sauce!!) When ever we had takeaways I was fairly careful but it always consisted of hot chips, which I've now realised just how much that nasty antioxidant affected her ... the poor thing, I thought I was doing the right thing but I was just making it worse.

Over the last 5 weeks we have seen our daughter turn into a wild crazy thing twice, once was exactly 48 hours after eating hot chips twice in one day aaaghhh - we had to lock her in her room, she was OUT OF CONTROL!!!! The second time was after my mother in law took her to the royal show- I'm still waiting on a list of foods she ate, but it was again 48 hours after! I always used to think she reacted immediately, but I guess she had so much crap accumulate in her that it just seemed that way!!!

Oh and the whole family have switched to A2 milk, and I have now just realized how sick and bloated normal milk makes me feel!!!

Anyway thank you again!!! After the last mega tantrum my husband was so amazed at the difference it has made he has decided to cut out lots of the bad foods he eats at work, he was also a child like her and figures it must be affecting him now in much the same way!! (He is quite the stubborn one that if I had suggested it there is no way he would have made the changes, hehehe!!!).

Update...

The difference in Lilly's behaviour is that she has gone from throwing major tantrums over very small issues which used to result in her being locked in her room until she calmed down - mostly for our sanity because she was just wild, it could last anywhere from an hour to half a day sometimes!!!! She would disagree with everything, talk back, never do what we asked- including simple things like going to the toilet, so she used to constantly wet her pants instead, or she wouldn't get dressed for school- even though she absolutely loves going.

Before diet everything was a battle - I used to look at her and think if she was someone else's kid I would avoid spending time with that person because of how hard she made everything, so I of course have been carrying around a huge amount of guilt from having thoughts like that. I also couldn't work out why my 2 kids were so different, so I've spent a few years blaming myself for this thinking it must have been something I did whilst I was pregnant or breastfeeding etc. Its been really hard, I've been on medication for anxiety for the past 6 months - surprising I didn't start taking something years ago considering how badly I felt I was coping with these issues!!!

Now we have an ange l- the transformation is truly amazing!!! If she does misbehave it actually only takes a 1-2-3 and she usually does what needs to be done or said, the few time she has gone to time out, its been for her ten- tens (our timeout rule is she has to calmly breathe and count to ten, ten times- she can count to 100 now so its changed a bit- good counting practice lol) and then she comes out calmly and apologizes etc.

It's going to be harder to get my in-laws on my side - I gave a list of what she shouldn't eat last week, and Nana returned her with a list of what she ate, AAAGHGH was all I could say. Vegemite sandwiches, croissants, take-away chicken rolls, mini magnum icecreams. So we had a bit of a rough time Saturday night/Sunday - but we coped and at least I knew what it was this time instead of just thinking I'm a hopeless mum!!! - Andrea

[812] Asthma researchers ignore the evidence - breathlessness, sleep apnea, tachycardia, pins and needles, anxiety from preservatives (June 2009)

What is amazing to me is that the researchers don't seem to be aware that some preservatives and flavour enhancers can also give you asthma or make symptoms worse. I've experienced this first hand. I regularly consumed a so called healthy cereal every day that contained dried fruit which was laced with preservatives. My symptoms of breathlessness, sleep apnea, tachycardia, pins and needles, anxiety etc. kept getting worse. I ended up in casualty at the local hospital several times, but they could not discover the cause. I had heart checks, x-rays, stress tests and still no answers. Finally at a party one of the guests refused certain food and proceeded to tell me about her allergic reactions to food additives. As she was describing her reactions, I realised her symptoms were identical to mine. She told me about your website. I went home that night and threw out everything in my pantry with food additives and I slowly recovered. I'm very careful now, but eating out is a challenge and that is where I get caught out, even when I choose healthy options such as a salad or sandwich. At the airport I had a turkey and salad sandwich and within 20 minutes I was really struggling to breath - Miryana by email.

[803] 'After failsafe kicked in he started to make friends' (June 2009)

Thank you so very much for doing all you do. You have improved my family's life immensely. My 5 yo son is now at school, and if I hadn't found failsafe when I did last year, I'm sure that he would have been in the principal's office on a regular basis for behavioural problems. He had spent three terms of kinder year not making a single friend at kinder, and having anxiety about going there, not to mention the tantrums he threw while he was there. After failsafe kicked in, he loved going and started to make a couple of friends. He is at the end of his second term at school, and has done so well, made a number of good friends, has learned heaps and - has never been sent to the principal's office!! There is still a way to go in educating the teachers in schools, but I am taking this one day at a time. - Joanne, Vic

[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

[711] Heart symptoms from benzoates, bread preservative and sulphites (December 2008)

My 14-year-old son has Aspergers syndrome. He experiences arrhythmia and severe heart palpitations every time he consumes any additives 211, 282, 220 etc. If he has been free from these additives for over two weeks then he will get away with the first exposure and then it accumulates and gets worse. We saw a heart specialist and he found no problems, just blaming it on anxiety. He also gets more aggressive and violent once it accumulates... like Jekyll and Hyde. Sadly it is so hard to convince and be believed by doctors and his psychiatrist that these additives affect him. - *Therese, by email*

[706] Turned into a terror overnight on artificial colours (November 2008)

Our little boy was a perfect baby who turned into a terror overnight at about 18 months when we started giving him adult yogurt containing artificial colours. It took a little while for us to figure it out but two days after stopping the yogurt, he became an angel again! We'd managed to figure this out for ourselves but were perplexed when he'd have 'episodes' of difficult behaviour even though we thought we'd eliminated all artificial additives. Your book was a revelation. We are now aware of the not-so-obvious additives and think our little boy has a mild sensitivity to too many salicylates.

My husband and I are also happier, healthier and more relaxed now that we have eliminated additives etc from our lives. I now look back on times in my life when I suffered from insomnia, anxiety and stress and can see that this could have been attributed to my diet of commercial pasta sauce and cheap wine. We are all so much better off now... so thank you so much! – *Nikki, NSW*

[672] Profound migraine, trigeminal neuralgia and the cream cheese diet (September 2008)

I stumbled upon your web page by accident. I have lived the last 30 years with profound migraine and trigeminal neuralgia. I am on some powerful meds and am trying to put off MVD (microvascular decompression) surgery. My headaches are chronic and have absolutely stolen the best years of my life. I have almost learned to expect and just deal with the incessant pain. But I think I just may have accidentally made an odd discovery. I wanted to lose a few pounds and I decided to do Dr. Atkins Fat Fast for a few days - which is simply cream cheese and nothing else. Within two days my head was pain free. So I am thinking this is very strange: is eating food giving me headaches??? I began to research and came upon histamines. I am amazed as I have never been 'allergic' to anything and never had sinus problems. I did note to the doctor that I was certain oranges had triggered migraine attacks - and wine or alcohol and dark chocolate. He told me to stay away from them but never mentioned histamines. I used to have friends ... a life ... I have contemplated suicide many times. I have been told to put ice packs on my head. I fantasize about somehow being present at my own autopsy and taking a hammer and beating my own head and face to pieces. Now I think I am on to what might have caused this pain all these years. – by email, USA [preservative-free cream cheese is one of many failsafe foods - S]

[648] ADHD teen suicide attempts (May 2008) Winner of Courage Award May 2008

I started failsafe eating a week ago in absolute desperation with my 14 year-old son who was diagnosed with ADHD and ODD at the age of 6 years old. He progressed well on medication until we had a car accident last year and he suffered minor brain damage. After the accident his behaviour became worse and he has attempted suicide several times. Last Wednesday I took him to hospital for sedation after he broke windows and several holes in the wall with his head. Thursday morning I searched the net for a solution and came across your website. I started the diet that day. Today I have a son who obeys, talks to you face to face, calmer, quieter, he smiles and has got himself a job part time which he loves. If he is offered food at work he says no and takes his own or waits until he gets home.

One week later ... Today is day 15 and he is still going great. We have just had the best school holidays with our two sons playing instead of fighting physically and verbally. At work, his boss doesn't even know he has ADHD and ODD. He did eat a piece of chicken at work and advised me his brain felt funny and would not eat anything that is not on the list. I'm glad he tried something off the list in moderation and noticed the difference. Your Failsafe Cookbook has been a great help and I do not leave the house without the list of basic foods and list of additives. I call this my bible. Not only has his behaviour changed but also his stomach pains and migraines are a thing of the past. The television has gone from a volume of 60 to 15. Thank you for your website that changed our lives and made my teenager happier. The difference has been unbelievable. - *Janelle, Qld.*

[642] Asthma update two years on (May 2008)

Richie's original story ([402] March 2006) described how limiting his intake of preservatives and sulphite containing foods such as mince meat, prawns, pizza, processed meats etc had helped him with breathing problems he'd suffered for over 20 years.

His update in April 2008 reads: You probably get many emails of thanks and I have sent one or two previously but what the hell, I'm going to send you another one just to let you know how much my life has improved since taking your advice. I thank you with every positive emotion I have for who you are, what you stand for and for changing my life. I have no more breathing difficulties, no more sleep problems, no more anxiety and all this leads to no more stress. No money can buy this. I have been educating the people in my life on how damaging additives, preservatives, sulphites etc. are and sent links to your site to everyone in my address book - Richie, Vic.

[625] Anxiety attack in an adult from Nurofen (February 2008)

My husband has had a serious tooth ache on the weekend. He has taking Panadol and needed more relief, so I gave him some Nurofen. Well, within 5-10 minutes, he was irrational and aggressive, along with a huge anxiety attack. He then took some more two days later with the same reaction. – by email

[593] Additive-free improvements in Generalised Anxiety Disorder with panic attacks (November 2007)

My daughter who is 16 has Generalised Anxiety Disorder, with panic attacks. So I have tried to keep her on a mostly additive free diet. It has been a bit tricky, but so long as I have something ready for her after school, she doesn't care what she eats. I haven't tried to restrict her when she's out with friends, but she takes her lunch to school and only eats the bad stuff probably on the weekend. After getting serious about cutting out additives I suddenly noticed one night that our house had become a lot calmer. I guess it wasn't overnight (didn't really expect it to be) but I all of a sudden realised that things were travelling very smoothly. So I definitely believe that cutting out additives have made a big difference to her whole personality, and produced a calmer household all round. [Update one month later, this family is now reducing salicylates]. – be email

[564] 635: "An attack of 635": anxiety, racing heart, headaches, rash (May 2007) SHARED COURAGE AWARD STORY FOR MAY 2007 NEWSLETTER

I was suffering with what the doctor said was normal for my age 39, higher blood pressure, heart palpitations, not able to sleep on my left hand side, rash around my groin and armpits that I couldn't get rid of, weekly headaches and to top it of waking up at 2-3am every morning with a anxiety attack.

I was attending a anxiety meeting every week and seeing a psychologist but the problem was that I couldn't identify with any of the other people that came to the anxiety meeting. It seemed all of their complaints of the 100 or so different people that came to the meeting related to cyclic thought process that brought on the anxiety and kept them in that loop. I on the other hand felt a little on edge but was very relaxed about life. I delved into unresolved tensions with my psychologist but still no relief. Yoga and relaxation exercises seemed to help but what it truly did was let me watch my body go through the symptoms while I watched it happen in the third person. Because my symptoms didn't fit the norm I refused to take any form of medication. I felt it was stupid to compound the problem until I knew what was causing it.

Finally I had yet again another anxiety attack. This time it was unbearable and my heart went over the 199 bpm that my machine could measure. I tried everything to relax but my system went into overdrive. My mother

came around and my wife was there to help. I am amazingly good at relaxing my body but nothing seemed to help. I called nurse on call and they called an ambulance immediately upon hearing my symptoms. The ambulance arrived and went through the routine of checking me over and in the time they were there my body stabilised to around 100bpm. They gave me the option of going to hospital and waiting in the waiting room for 4-6 hours or stay at home and try and get over it. I took the wait at home option. The interesting thing from all of that is the male ambulance officer who leaned against the door frame for the whole time they were there said "gee you look like my wife does when she has a attack of 635" I thought he was full of it and ignored him at the time. I felt like I had run a marathon.

The following day I looked up 635 on the internet and noticed the rash and the headaches that I had were the same but nothing else rang a bell. Having nothing else to go on I looked into what had 635 in it as an ingredient. I was amazed to find my pies, pasties from the local bakery had beef booster and hence 635 + 621 that was Monday nights explained then a lot of chips + crackers that I had for lunch - even ones from the health food section of my local supermarket that state quite clearly on the packaging that 635 is not 621 and therefore is not bad for you. What a laugh! I must stress I had no belief that 635 was the cause of anything but my rash and headaches. I have not changed my lifestyle in any way except for removing 635 + 621 from my diet and only very recently removed 282. But a key interesting note is the 12 hour delay from eating the food to the full blown symptoms. I still eat selected junk food, I still exercise the same amount, I have even more pressure at work and I still get broken sleep from my now 2 year old.

When I would go to my doctor, her face would drop in that "not you again look" she would listen to me with bored expression and write in her notes, anxiety related. Please also note that my doctor since then acknowledged she has absolutely no knowledge of food intolerance re 635 – 621 and their symptoms. How are you expected to be helped if they are blind to these issues? The way I wish to truly express myself as to how I feel re their mainstream blindness is limited by my overriding desire to keep this letter polite. I have not read anywhere a person with my exact same experiences but I know it is simple. I have stopped eating 635 + 621 and I am back to how I remember the way I used to be.

From that week....

My multiple rashes of many years cleared up completely!

Not one single headache!

I have not had a single heart palpitation!

Not one single anxiety attack!

No hand or body tremors!

No racing heart!

No feeling of tension!

The only exception to this was when I went to a mothers' group party and ate some salt and vinegar chips laced with 621 + 635. I had a bad night sleep that night. I checked the chips at the supermarket the following day and found the suspect ingredients. I will not eat any food that I cannot check the ingredients. Hungry Jacks will not return my calls to tell me what foods have 635 in, and Nandos will not return my calls as well. It is of interesting note that the American version of Hungry Jacks (Burger King) + KFC list their ingredients but the similar Australian version of the web sites have the ingredients list missing. I FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN – Wayne, by email

[506] 635: Symptoms lasted for about 5 days (January 2006)

I believe that I am yet another victim of flavour enhancer E635.

I had a strong allergic reaction to "something" in Early February of this year. At first I thought it was a prescription medicine that I have just started taking (again). I stopped taking my medicine but nothing improved. I was confused because this medicine had never caused a reaction before. My Doctor suspected food or some kind of virus.

I suffered the following reactions: (in order of appearance)

- * Burning sensation to the skin
- * Rash on my feet
- * Raised rash on my chest and then sides
- * Severe, raised, rash on my back and very itchy legs and arms
- * Mild stomach upset
- * Heavily swollen face and lips (3 occasions)
- * Mild anxiety

The symptoms lasted for about 5 days and required 3 trips to the Emergency ward of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, seven days off work, a stay over night in Hospital and even a trip in an ambulance. Needless to say, my wife and I were greatly distressed during this ordeal. I then read about E635 and discovered that it was in a wider range of foods that I had expected. Tracing back through foods I don't normally consume I found that the probable culprits were either a seasoning mix for a popular Taco Dinner Kit OR two sausage rolls I had consumed. Both foods were consumed about 20-30 hours prior to the initial reaction. The long delay led me to blame the prescription medicine. I never knew that a reaction could take so long to appear. I am now loath to consume E635 in any form again in case I suffer an even worse reaction. Please feel free to use my account (less personal details) on your site, or, in your battle with the authorities that permit such chemical junk to enter the food chain. Keep up the good work – John, Melbourne

[476] 635: Even felt suicidal (January 2006)

I have suffered from a red itchy rash for the last 7 weeks which has worked its way over most of my body. It started around the waist and moved down to my thighs and legs and then up the back of my legs and buttocks. It has also appeared on my arms and underarms, neck and eyelids. I first thought it was hives and went to the doctor who prescribed cortisone cream and antihistamine. However, the hives didn't go away just appeared less angry at times. It appears to be worse at night and my itching has driven my husband and myself mad. I have been very depressed and have had several crying bouts - I have even felt suicidal. Clothing around my waist area seems to irritate and makes me come up in welts. I have been to a naturopath and a Chinese herbalist, it sometimes looks as if is getting better but last night it was worse than ever. Then I came across your website and recognised my symptoms from the descriptions and photographs. I ate a take-away veggie burger yesterday for lunch and have also been using a stock powder (Massel brand) which contains 635 – Dianna from NSW.

[463] "Tell Sue I'm not a cranky pants anymore" (November 2006)

I am a primary teacher and thought I had done everything 'right' to prepare my daughter for school. I was surprised and shocked when the teacher was less than enthusiastic about her first day. Despite her apparent high intelligence, Amelia has progressed slowly and her teacher describes her as inattentive and unaware of what is going on in the classroom.

After three terms of this I finally relented and took Amelia to see a paediatrician. She was diagnosed with ADHD (it is also suspected that my husband had ADHD as a child and has learnt to channel his energy into work and sport). I was very reluctant to give Amelia the prescribed dose of Ritalin, particularly as her behaviour wasn't unmanageable at home. (After reading your book, perhaps I have been an 'immersion' mother and have fooled myself by thinking 'my child isn't as bad as that'.)

After much discussion my husband and I decided to trial Ritalin. I only lasted two days before maternal guilt, severe anxiety (particularly after looking at www.Ritalindeath.com) and Amelia's racing heartbeat helped us to make the decision to stop the medication. It was after my husband talked about our experiences at work, that one of his colleagues suggested we look at your website.

That was a significant day in our household. The next day, with the help of my children we emptied out the cupboards and started failsafe. The changes that your suggestions have made to my family are impressive. After 11 days on the diet, I received my first unsolicited positive comment from Amelia's teacher about her work and she also got two awards in the same week.

My 2 1/2 year old son has demonstrated even more dramatic improvement. Even though we didn't think there was a specific need for him to be on the diet, we are doing it as a family. Behaviours that I put down to being a boy – climbing on everything, running everywhere, talking loudly - have all stopped and he is now a gentle, quiet little boy. His day care teacher is amazed by the changes in him.

As for me, the headaches that I have experienced every few days have stopped and the psoriasis on my arms is starting to heal. I have read three of your books and it is as if I have woken from a dream. Your description of your daughter in year 1 and husband could be about my family. When I read p38 "She'll grow out of it" Fed up with ADHD I was astounded - that is Amelia!!!! She is also very good at drawing and is a creative, lateral thinker (not that these qualities have been recognised at school).

Sue, I thank you for the years of trial and error that you have gone through to make this so much easier for all the families who are experiencing problems now. Amelia asked me to say thank you from her in this letter. 'Tell Sue I'm not a cranky pants anymore' she said. – email, NSW

[457] 635: Heart palpitations from 635 (September 2006)

I have been getting heart palpitations for about 18 months. Saw a doctor who said it was anxiety attacks. Rubbish. So I started to take more notice of the foods I was eating. I noticed that it was instant after certain foods - corn chips, Sanitarium vegie sausages and some chinese foods (fried rice etc.).

I know its 635 because the palpitations come within half an hour of eating those foods, and are quite strong for about 2-3 hours. I'm still trying to figure out if it lasts to a lesser degree for a few more days, or if I've eaten something else in the meantime that I don't react well to. – by email.

[455] Diet diary of a six year old self-harmer (September 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.

[447] 'Fear of the dark' really a food reaction (August 2006)

We started the diet nearly a year ago for my son, a sweet 5 year old who would become an aggressive, extremely hyperactive and an emotional monster nearly every day. I saw you on A Current Affair and after taking muesli bars and sultanas (which I had thought were healthy) out of his diet I noticed most of his aggressive behaviour disappear.

After that we started the full diet and not only did our son become an angel, we noticed that our daughter was a very strong amine reactor, becoming uncontrollably emotional, depressed and 'full on', as well as having frequent nightmares and bedwetting. Unfortunately since we have moved 2 months ago our son has gone backwards fast, I now think as a result of amines in meat from new butchers. It is so upsetting to see all the progress disappear, and he has had HUGE problems at school this term. I have traveled back to our old butchers to stock up on meat and am started to see some improvement after one week.

The biggest shock for me however, was when I recently discovered I was a food reactor!! I was a junk food addict and would eat about 5kg of chocolate a week. I can't believe now I had so many symptoms, and I never even put them together as symptoms, let alone found the source of the problem! I was getting migraines, I

constantly had a headache behind my eyes, I felt very faint and disoriented, had stomach pains that felt like needles - usually after eating lollies, and I was always bloated - something which really upset me.

The weirdest thing to attribute to food however was my extreme 'fear of the dark' as I called it. I would be terribly scared of the dark, I would think that my mind thought it could see little people and things out of the corner of my eye, even though I knew they weren't there, I would open my eyes every 10 seconds while trying to get to sleep, just to check if there were monsters or robbers there, and every time I closed my eyes all I could picture in my head was horrible things that would scare me. I was a bit worried I was starting to go crazy, then I stopped eating chocolate and didn't even notice all these symptoms disappeared.

It wasn't until I splurged on a whole chocolate cake over two nights that I discovered what had caused these problems. After eating the cake I was completely on edge. I couldn't sit down for ten seconds without turning around to make sure there were no monsters or robbers behind me. Eventually I had to sit with my back to the wall so I wouldn't think there were things behind me. That was the last time I ate chocolate, and the thought of ever eating it again scares me! – by email.

[418] My son is a state ward (May 2006)

My son 14 is a state ward and has been for 18 months. His behaviour at home was violent, aggressive and surly to such an extent that my safety was threatened. He had damaged property, harmed pets, broken my bones ... He was 12 when he went into care and this behaviour had gone on since the age of 7. He tried to kill himself a number of times, initially playing chicken with cars, starving himself, much self harm behaviour and nearly succeeded last year when he cut an artery in his leg.

I tried to get help for years only to be told that I was a bad mother. I was accused of abusing my son so many times it wasn't funny, even dragged before courts for it. They didn't get it. I was the one with the bruises and broken bones not the kid. He was never diagnosed with any disorder. All behaviour was put down to an incident when he was 6 and a teen tried to molest him. I had seen him lose touch with reality and even respond to voices - at 8 years old. School suspensions started in grade 2. His school had a sign that other children would file out of the classroom on a pre-determined signal ... I could go on and on.

He became a state ward after a particularly bad incident where I ended up with concussion but to get him off me I had to bite him ... therefore proving what a violent mother I am.

I got your book Fed Up from the library and read it over the weekend. What a revelation to me.

He has just been diagnosed as a possible coeliac. He has always had some intolerances and his sister had GI probs and lactose intolerance too. Both have not done well away from what they ate at home, which on reflection was low gluten and low additives.

Well, at the moment the lad is keen to clean up the diet, at least the gluten part, but I think it is too late to mend our relationship.

I should have done more research and figured out the food connection earlier. I did make food connections, from when he was very young. He was lactose intolerant, had trouble with other foods. He was also a bedwetter until nearly 10. He always had gut problems. We noticed if he had certain foods he would be worse, even his family day care parents learnt the hard way about the foods. His doctors knew this, the psychologists knew this but NOBODY made the connection. Even now the only reason he got checked out was I pushed and after a few incidents in the unit I raised Duty of Care.

Anyway at least I have hope now. Hope that he won't end up in the justice or mental health system. Hope that he can get back to a normal school. Hope that maybe one day he can come home to visit. This system he has ended up in is not used to bright kids and he is in a school for not so bright ones. Meanwhile he has learnt heaps of bad behaviour from others ...

I can see that failsafe foods have been your work for years and indeed you work very hard to get the word out. What I can't understand is why more people don't suspect food problems in behaviours with kids. How many more families have to go through what we have been through?

So Sue if any of our story helps other families or professionals please go ahead and use it. You don't have children for other people to raise. I should count myself fortunate I still get a say as I am still a guardian but it is difficult and if the connections had been made when I first suspected them none of this need have happened - reader, Vic.

[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 the failsafe diet in the past with one of our other children, but had not ever thought of foods being linked to Tim's mood problems. When you mention the "gifted and depressed" child in your recent talk my ears immediately pricked up and took note. Tim has been identified as highly gifted and everyone has been saying that is the cause of his problems but I have always felt there was something else underlying that was contributing. We will be contacting our GP today and hopefully starting the failsafe diet ASAP...

Two months later ...

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

One week 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.— by email.

[217] Saved him just in time (October 2002)

About 3 months ago I wrote you a very short letter explaining my 5 year old's diagnosis (severe ADHD/severe Anxiety Disorder/ ODD) and asking for a brochure. Well, thanks for the brochure and the very nice note you sent back. You were so confident that RPA would "sort him out" that it really lifted my hopes incredibly and helped me stick to the ultra elimination diet he'd been put on.

You were so right - I (and his brother, my friends, family and school) saw changes I never thought I would see. Basically this diet has saved him just in time from starting at a special school for behaviour disorders. By mid

second term - pre-diet, in Kindergarten - he had been suspended 7 times for violent behaviour. Since the diet, he hasn't even been sent to the Deputy. You were very perceptive in the letter you sent - yes, life had been absolute hell - there is no other way to describe it. After I received your letter I bought "Fed Up" and read it in 3 nights - that gave me even more hope. Thank you so much for all the work you do and the fantastic web site - I just can't get enough of it. If I ever come to Darwin I owe you a big thankyou hug! - by email, NSW

[127] Camphor laurel and Jesse (this is what parents go through) (November 2001)

8th October 2001.

Department of Education and Training
Northern NSW

Dear Sir,

I refer to ... our son Jesse.

Jesse suffers from Multiple Chemical Intolerance (MCI). This can affect his skin, behaviour and general health. Jesse is most effected by cleaning products, food chemicals (colours, preservatives and flavour enhances), strong odours and certain plants. His reaction can be dramatic and instantaneous, or can build up over time.

Jesse is presently under the care of Paediatricans Dr M from Lismore and Dr Velencia Soutter from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. He is on the RPA elimination diet under the control of dietitians Anne Swain from the RPA and N from the Lismore Base Hospital. He has been on this for some time and the change in his health and behaviour has been quite dramatic. However, recently Jesse's health and behaviour have deteriorated which has coincided with camphor laurel chips being placed at his school. I was made aware of the camphor chips after a spitting incident involving Jesse.

On Wednesday the 12th September X from the school telephoned my wife and said that 'Jesse had spat on another child, was behaving disgustingly and swearing and that he was with him now and what would she like done with him'. X was aggressive and abrupt. The exact events as to what happened are unclear as there have been a number of different stories but apparently Jesse and another kindergarten child were in the toilets after the morning assembly. The other boy told his teacher that Jesse had spat on him. A teacher's Aid was sent to retrieve Jesse from his classroom where he hid under a table. Jesse's teacher was also in the class. Jesse called the Aid a 'fat girl' (she isn't fat) and was then taken to X and later to the Principal.

I went out to the school at 11am and was approach on the veranda of the classroom by Y. She asked if I was looking for Jesse and said that he was in the office and that he had spat on one of her children and was swearing at teachers. She was obviously rude and abrupt. Parents and children were also present undertaking 'groups' and a young girl told us that Jesse was sitting at his desk, which he was. I attempted to speak to X but he was not in his office. Later I returned to the school to have lunch with Jesse as it was school open day.

We sat down in the assembly area where I noticed the strong camphor smell. I moved Jesse as he was becoming agitated and red faced. X then approached me in the playground area. I was uncomfortable speaking to X as there were many parents and children listening. I told X that Jesse's behaviour in the morning was unacceptable but I thought the problem was caused by the strong camphor smell as the dumping of the chips coincided with Jesse's behaviour and health deteriorating. His teacher had also made the link with the camphor when the trees were initially trimmed.

Prior to this incident the school had not been in contact regarding our son. We had made visits to the Principal

on two occasions at which time we gave him letters from the Paediatrician and Dietitian (attached) and gave him a personal letter (attached) and information on MCI. This was done on the suggestion of the Infants Department. We did have regular contact with Jesse's teacher throughout the year. She was fully aware of Jesse's condition and was fully supportive. She had educated her class/parents about how food/chemicals can effect him. She even banned cleaning products from the class that she had noticed effected him. Jesse seemed to be progressing well. He was very popular having friends from kinder to year 4. He was the second child in kindergarten to be awarded the Principal's Award (which requires 25 Merit Certificates). However, things changed dramatically in a very short period of time when the Principal became involved. The staff's attitude changed from support to contempt and aggression. Those who showed sympathy were isolated. There seemed to be a constant vigil on our son and a concerted effort to discredit him. In the last month Jesse became obviously agitated and jittery at school, and became unwell. We were requested by our Paediatrician to remove Jesse from this environment immediately.

I decided to contact Jesse's preschool. They informed me that the behaviour Jesse was displaying at Z School was not displayed at his preschool. I also contacted the Northern Rivers Department of Health regarding the camphor. I was put in contact with their Toxicology Unit in Sydney who informed me that camphor laurel has highly volatile oils and is probably not an appropriate substance to have chipped around a school as it is toxic. I also telephoned Far North Coast Weeds who also said the same thing. As did the Southern Cross University who are about to commence a study on the effects of camphor laurel on humans. I also contacted the Department of Agriculture who had a similar opinion.

The next day I telephoned the Principal regarding Jesse's behaviour and the camphor laurel chips. I was met with instant hostility, impugnation and scoff. P stated that it would be impossible for Jesse to react to a natural occurring substance such as camphor laurel and that my family is using this as an excuse for disgusting and unacceptable behaviour.

P continually stated that he and the staff believe I am 'obstructional' in this matter and that complaints had been made. But when questioned as to how he would only comment that I am being 'obstructional now'. He said that I have made ridiculous demands saying that he would not remove the camphor chips for one child. He also stated that I was critical of staff, in particular X and Y (I have only spoken to each once). P would not listen to the fact that I told David I supported his actions in handling the spitting incident. However, I was critical of the fact that the matter was discussed on the veranda of a classroom during 'groups' and in the playground in front of other parents and children on open day and very much in public. P's comment was that his school is a 'very open school'. Jesse may only be 6 but I feel that he and myself have some rights to privacy.

Also, P refused to acknowledge that I attended the school the previous morning and spoke to Y and attempted to see X after he had telephoned my wife. He continually stated that I did not arrive at the school until 1pm. I told him that I was at the school at 11am and later at 1pm for school open day and it was during this visit that I noticed the strong smell of camphor. But P simply refused to acknowledge that I was present at the school at 11am which is bewildering seeing that I spoke to several people and was seen by many more. Another child even asked Jesse if he would spit on him.

Furthermore, P was not interested in what the preschool said about Jesse. He just stated that I was abusing X. When I said I wasn't even speaking about X he said 'you are now abusing Y. I kept saying 'do you want to hear what the preschool said'. P said he was 'not interested, you are abusing my teachers, I am terminating this conversation' and hung up. The whole conversation bordered on the absurd and the ridiculous, a disgraceful imputation on a man charged with the responsibility of 520 children. Further, he seemed to enjoy a certain amount of satisfaction and gratitude from destroying the confidence and reputation of a 6 year old child.

P has now deliberately and maliciously misrepresented the contents of our conversation in an attempt to

discredit our son and family. He has made the matter the topic of conversation throughout the school by both parents and teachers. He has made a young child the scapegoat of his obvious inability to understand what is normal and abnormal behaviour. P and some of his staff appear to have obvious personal issues that should not be aired in the school environment.

P has scorned and scoffed at medical advice and has shown a total disregard for the safety of a child with a disability. He has shown discrimination and prejudice towards a child and has shown a blatant disregard for confidentiality and privacy. He has been bordering on slanderous and has humiliated and embarrassed a child because of that child's disability. He has shown an absolute lack of care for a child with a disability and has viewed this disability with disdain. I will refrain from commenting on the innuendo made about our parenting skills and only say that on a number of occasions we were told that it is okay to slap your child.

My family has been associated with the Z School for over 30 years. My wife and her siblings attended the school in 1960s and 1970s and our older children in the early 1990s. It is most disheartening that this association may end because of the prejudices and ignorance of the Principal. P's attitude and actions has not only drastically changed the life of our son but has changed the life of our whole family. My wife will have to cease work to home tutor Jesse under the Distance Education programme. Jesse's Paediatrician believes that Jesse will be better off being home schooled in a more sympathetic and understanding environment as he is displaying anxiety and stress – a direct consequence of the taunts and attitude of P.

I would appreciate your comments regarding this matter and ask as to what avenues (by way of an official apology by P and legal action) are available in these circumstances. There appear to be very serious matters relating to child safety, care and welfare, privacy, confidentiality, discrimination and defamation issues that need to be addressed. P is of the belief that he is beyond reproach because of his position. Should you require any further information regarding this matter do not hesitate to contact me on

...

Yours Faithfully,

David & Kim.

[009] Sarah and Callum - two children with autism (April 1999)

My name is Julie, and our family consists of my husband Ian, our daughter Sarah aged seven, and our sons Callum aged three and Devon aged 16 months. Last year in April Sarah was diagnosed as autistic and in November Callum also received a diagnosis of autism. Pretty interesting year, I can tell you! I knew nothing about autism, all I knew was there was something about my daughter that just wasn't working as it should. Both the children are what they call "high functioning" autistic. Which in everyday terms means that there is no intellectual disability and they have a lot of skills.

I remember now people commenting on how 'busy' Sarah was as a toddler. As she was my only child, I never knew any different. She very rarely slept, we used to be up until 1 or 2 am rocking her, pushing her, anything to get her to sleep. When she did sleep it was only for a few hours at a time. She started coming out in terrible rashes over her arms, legs and torso when she was around fourteen months old. I went to a naturopath who placed her on a very restricted diet and everything cleared up. Sarah's behaviour improved and I thought I had cured the problem. I now realise we had taken most of the problem-causing areas out of her diet. We were told that after Sarah's immune system had time to recover we could more or less resume a normal diet which after 12 months we did. The rashes never returned and we thought we had it licked.

But all that happened is the symptoms appeared in a different manner. Sarah became withdrawn, anxious, and

suffered severe night terrors. When she was three, Sarah started Montessori school and then we started to notice other things. Sarah was exceedingly shy, she would not communicate with other children even after she had known them for a long periods of time. She had no recognition of colour and never described anything by its colour. We had her eyes and ears tested, but nothing showed up. When Sarah was four, Callum was born. When he was three months old we moved up to Tom Price in Northern Western Australia. We are fairly isolated here, our main centre being five hours drive.

Sarah started preschool and would vomit for no apparent reason in the mornings before school. She was tested and pronounced hypoglycaemic. I was told to feed her more often. Grade 1 presented more problems, huge anxiety attacks and night terrors lasting two hours. I would pick her up from school and find her sitting crying under her desk. Still I was told it was developmental and she would grow out of it. In desperation I took her out of school and went back to Perth. I put Sarah back in Montessori and everything stopped - no anxiety, no night terrors, no vomiting. I eventually had Sarah assessed and we received a diagnosis but not a lot else.

Later that year Callum started repetitive behaviours such as pushing his head along the floor, staring at fans, complete withdrawal, no eye contact and delayed speech. By the time he was diagnosed I was drowning. I wanted to go back to the city, anywhere where I could get some help. I even withdrew from life myself. It was too hard to go out, I got sick of people staring, making helpful or unhelpful suggestions, it just all got too hard.

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

I am convinced! Sarah is managing mainstream school without the stress of last year. She has made friends. Her communication skills had improved so much within two weeks of starting the program that her teachers asked me what had changed. Callum now makes eye contact with people and laughs and talks. He is just getting better and better, his vocabulary is so vast now it makes me gasp! He enjoys playgroup and is even starting to play with others.

I know a lot of autistic children will only eat a limited amount of food, and Callum is definitely in that category but I believe that it is so very beneficial to make the food they eat failsafe. I also found that after they withdrew from our previous diet, which with Callum took around six weeks, their tastes had completely changed so they didn't mind the failsafe food at all. In fact, Sarah has asked me never to give her food that isn't good for her because it makes her body feel bad.

I am grateful to Sue for writing her book. It has completely changed our lives and it has, I'm sure, completely changed my children's future. - Julie

[1117] One-liners after Fedup Roadshow (August 2012)

My son has been off most artificial additives since 2005 and we can really see the difference when we let him have things occasionally such as at birthday parties. He is now 9. I'm sure he would have been put on medication had we not discovered your website. Now I'm keen now to do the full Elimination Diet to check for anything else, and particularly to see whether salicylates and amines have an impact on my other children - they don't seem to react to anything artificial, but there is more anger, aggression and irritability in my house than I think is reasonable so it is worth a try. - Melinda by email.

Thanks for all the work you've done on food additives and the effects they have on people. Without it, I would never have tracked down the weird heart palpitations and early morning panic attacks I have after eating ribonucleotides - Lynne by email.

[1008] Fragrance: Our sensitivity to perfumes and fragranced products (March 2011) COURAGE AWARD

I've become increasingly sensitive to perfumes and fragrances. For me it triggers an intense, immediate burning headache, dizziness, nausea, and a reflexive instinct to want to get away. The longer I'm exposed to the smell, I find it hard to look up, hard to make eye contact with people, my heart rate speeds up and I feel hot and a bit shivery. I feel like I have to keep an eye on the ground to know where it is, have trouble telling where objects are around me, and kind of lose my sense of where I am in space.

Background noise seems to become louder as well, and I feel a rising panic and need to escape. I had a 'brain episode' about 3-4 yrs ago, some kind of massive seizure that had symptoms similar to a stroke. Since then, my problems with perfumes have increased dramatically, though I think I've always had a slight problem with scents. In March 2009 I was prescribed Methotrexate (an immuno-suppressant) as my psoriasis had become so severe it almost landed me in hospital with a life-threatening version. This has side effects of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and dizziness, which have gradually lessened over time, but still rear up at least a couple of times each week. Since being on this drug I find it particularly difficult to cope with perfumes. From what my two ASD boys have been able to tell me, I think their responses are fairly similar, but they have difficulty describing the sensations, and they tend to go into Autistic withdrawal / blocking behaviours.

A couple of weeks ago we took the boys to a cinema to watch Despicable Me. A teenage girl entered with a small group of friends and sat in the row in front of us. The perfume smell was so strong I had to shift the four of us back 3 rows to escape it, and still left the cinema with a headache.

The worst places for the boys and I to enter are public toilets with automatic fragrance sprayers. One was introduced to our local shopping centre, and we were caught unawares. I sat down on the toilet, and was suddenly sprayed by a fountain of this horrible scent – it triggered a bout of vomiting which meant I was stuck in there with the scent. When I finally escaped, I found that hubby had encountered the same problem on taking the boys into the Men's toilet. The elder was biting his hands and pulling his hair, and the younger was bouncing and squirming uncontrollably. We abandoned the idea of grocery shopping and went home to recover. Now we make sure we go to the toilet at home before we leave.

Windex and whiteboard cleaning spray have an appalling effect on my elder son, trigger out of control behaviours, self harm, high temperatures, headaches, vomiting and diarrhoea. Perfumes and body sprays such as Impulse are awful, incense sticks are a nightmare, car and toilet deodorizing products are the worst, possibly due to the confined, airless space. – by email

[940] 621: Fast and very irregular heart beats after Chinese meal (October 2010)

From time to time I notice an ectopic heart beat, Dr. tells me nothing unusual, most people get them. However last night after a couple of weeks eating really good and healthy natural foods we went out to a Chinese Restaurant. I like going there, but have not been there for a year or so I'd say. About an hour after I went to bed it began, I think you'd call it Tachycardia, a fast (100) and very irregular heartbeat. Some big strong thumping ones and then some feeble and fast ones. I got up, sat up for another 2 hours. Blood pressure had risen incredibly, and over the 2 hours settled down but the feeling on panic stayed. It's still here this morning actually and I didn't feel I could drive, so had to ask for a lift. Needless to say I am not having any of the left overs for lunch. Back to the straight and narrow. – Joy, NSW

[542] Palpitations and MSG (January 2007)

Having suffered panic attacks and palpitations on-and-off for years I started seriously looking at the foods and

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

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

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

[456] Heart palpitations and buzzing sensation (September 2006)

Some time ago I found some corn chips (Viva brand) that advertised having no MSG. I bought them a few times before connecting with them a very uncomfortable feeling of restlessness, agitation and panic, heart palpitations, hot flushes and a "buzzing" sensation; I thought I was having a panic attack. Since recognising the link I bought the chips once more to test the idea that this was the cause; after about 5 chips I started to feel the 'buzzing' and threw the rest of the packet away. - Kathy from Adelaide.

[412] Chocolate paranoia (May 2006)

Before going on the diet, I used to get panic attacks at night, where I would be absolutely convinced that there was a gunman just outside my window. When I finally did go on the diet, it was for the sake of my children, not myself, so I thought it was okay at week three to eat an enormous amount of chocolate - I believe it was one Hershey bar, and a massive Cadbury dairy milk block. The next day, I was so paranoid that I convinced myself that my husband was having an affair, and went to the extent of driving to his work to watch him through the window, then following him home on his bike. When he arrived home, I dashed outside and hid in the darkened garden, crying. After about four hours the paranoia episode just finished like that, and I had to explain myself to a perplexed husband - reader, NSW

[304] 'I assaulted my wife' (December 2003)

Last weekend I assaulted my wife and did horrific damage to her face. I have deep regret, humiliation, shame and remorse for my actions. I had been drinking most of the afternoon, then consumed two strawberry sundae tubs of icecream. I did not check the brand so I cannot be certain that the food colours contributed to the way I acted. Although the alcohol is obviously a large contributor, in the past I have never reacted violently after drinking alcohol. However, from the ages 18-25 I experienced panic and violent moods, then I started to look at my diet. Cordials with artificial colours especially red had been a part of my diet and I noticed a link. Since then I have avoided food colours where ever possible, however I simply overlooked the strawberry sundae as I love desserts and was having a good time. I think I have stumbled on to the cause for my actions, but I am not sure. - Graeme, by email

[036] 282: Jack's story: severe speech delay associated with bread preservative (April 2000)

I have been meaning to write to you for years to thank you for your books. We were on the right track with our then four year old son, Jack (now coming up to 10) when I read "Different Kids". I already suspected ADHD and knew very well that he reacted to food as do I. Jack had his first food reaction at 20 weeks gestation! I ate some of those awful red sugar-coated peanut things and he just went berserk, looping the loop and throwing himself all over the place for about an hour or so. So we were prepared.

I breastfed him for nearly three years - breastfeeding was only time I got to lie down and rest. He was a "windy" but fairly normal baby early on and I did avoid any foods in my diet that seemed to cause problems. He never liked to be left alone and would panic if put down while awake. From three months constant movement and novelty was required to keep him happy. When he was happy he was radiant and when he was not he was grizzly and constantly squirming with this giving way to frantic screaming if the boredom lasted for more than a few minutes. Out shopping, strangers loved him as he responded with such joy to any attention and he was a very attractive baby. I had to carry him on my back in a sling, the stroller was too boring, too far away from me and not social enough. I accepted all this as I had been told I was a very, very difficult baby - colic - and my expectations were therefore "realistic".

At four months I began to introduce solids - rice cereal with breast milk to mix. The novelty seemed to appeal to Jack! Then I began to mix a small amount of orange juice in with the cereal to boost iron absorption. From there I introduced apple, ripe banana, pureed vegies (broccoli, pumpkin, etc.). He wasn't so keen on this but I heard about adding cheese to make the vegies more appealing, so I did this, often using parmesan cheese as well as milder cheeses. Jack loved bolognaise sauce mixed in too. Another favourite was avocado. He loved apricot and yogurt. He had a small amount of mashed prune to counteract a tendency to constipation. I was so pleased that he ate well and proud he had such a good appetite and such an ideal diet. When others asked how he slept (pretty awfully) I could at least say, "But he eats really well".

Meanwhile our little boy was getting more and more grumpy and demanding and more and more miserable when he wasn't amused. I looked frantically for the "ideal toy" the thing that would hold his attention. Each new item was met with delight and then discarded within thirty seconds and the grizzling began again.

Jack woke at least twice a night. He was into everything and seemed to always want more - more - more. He wasn't babbling - ba ba ba & da da da at 10 months. (In retrospect, the first sign of his problems with auditory processing that later resulted in speech delay and difficulty in learning to read.) He never sat and played. He never sat! He went straight from crawling to being dissatisfied because he couldn't yet walk.

From the 4 months we put his "difficult" and unhappy behaviour down to "teething". The first tooth didn't appear until eleven months.

When Jack was four months old I ate a small amount of dark chocolate in an ice-cream and about one hour later breastfed Jack. Within half an hour he was screaming inconsolably and instead of being tense as crying babies are he just lay back in my arms in an almost relaxed way as he screamed (low muscle tone no doubt). I identified the chocolate as the most likely culprit - I'm now sure I was right. After Jack went to sleep I sat up and expressed my other breast out into a nappy!

He was still a delightful, smiling, social child as long as he had the undivided attention of someone and a constant stream of novelty.

I've gone into this first year in detail because it really shows most clearly what was going on even if it was not

obvious at the time.

My second child, a daughter called Ellen, was born when Jack was nearly 3 and a half. Jack was delighted and adored his little sister. The pregnancy was complicated by my blood pressure going high from 23 weeks. My mother came to look after us all as I was meant to be resting as well as taking anti-hypertensive medication. My mother just couldn't take Jack's behaviour.

I had been avoiding wheat in Jack's diet as I believed I had a problem with it. (My problem was actually with calcium propionate (282), of course, but cutting out all wheat did solve my problems of fatigue and fuzziness and so for years I thought I needed to avoid wheat). For convenience we changed to normal white bread from the supermarket. Jack loved it after the drier rye bread I had used formerly. I had not a clue about the preservative in the bread. Jack's behaviour went from bad to atrocious.

Jack's behaviour was at its all-time worst between the ages of 3 and 4. It was during this time he was eating the preserved bread. He put his hand through a windowpane during a tantrum. He woke with nightmares and screamed madly about and it was impossible to get through to him.

He went to bed late, reappearing often saying he was hungry and wanting (surprise, surprise) another slice of bread. He would wake at 4.30 in the morning wanting to be entertained. The only toy he persistently liked was his ride-on car. His behaviour and manner were almost autistic but for his insatiable sociability. His speech was very delayed and I don't think he really understood a lot of what was said to him. He was however very imaginative and inventive and liked to play pretend games, but always with someone. He had no liking for being read to but preferred to have me act out stories with both of us taking roles.

Needless to say I was exhausted and miserable. We lived half an hour out of town. My husband, Nick, was at that time managing farms. It was a very similar situation to yours, I think.

Jack was going to preschool in town a few days per week. Although they did not complain about Jack's behaviour (he has never been physically aggressive towards other people, even at his very worst and he's never said "I hate you" either - he is a very gentle character) When pressed they would say he was a bit weird, hiding in the playhouse and refusing to come out when the others were sitting on the mat listening to stories and taking off outside at inside time, etc, but he was only three so a lot of immaturity was allowed for.

My mother and my husband, Nick and I discussed Jack and his behaviour and decided that his things had got much worse around the time of the change in bread type. I took Jack off all wheat. The change was astonishing. He could have his socks put on without going berserk. You could talk to him and he would act on what was said. He didn't scream through everyday tasks such as bathing, dressing etc. When he went to preschool that week I dropped him off and didn't say anything about the changes. When I picked him up the teacher approached me and said "What have you done - he's a different child - he's playing with the others and listening to us."

Just before Jack went off wheat he had been assessed by a speech therapist at the preschool. She diagnosed, as best she could -we couldn't really keep Jack in the room much less anything like on-task - a severe expressive language delay and a moderate receptive language delay. Six weeks, later when off the wheat products, was reassessed by the same speech pathologist, using the part of the test that Jack had not done due to being non-cooperative. This time he seemed to have no significant receptive language delay and was only mildly delayed in his expressive language. She said she had never seen a child change so dramatically within such a short period of time.

Of course avoiding wheat meant avoiding a lot of foods, such as sausages. So Jack's diet also became generally blander and so did Jack. He was still difficult but at least he was "on the planet" now. He was only four but used

to ask me "Why am I so happy, Mum?"

After a couple of months I screwed up my courage to do a challenge for wheat. I cooked some pikelets so I knew just what had gone into them. No reaction other than a very happy child - yummy pikelets!

I challenged with bread, planning to do two-week-on -- two-week-off challenges to see if any difference was apparent. That challenge lasted for two slices of bread fed to Jack at 4.30 on a Friday afternoon (timed so as to coincide with the weekend when Nick would be about)!! Within forty-five minutes, Jack was off his brain. Screaming, upset by everything - he finally went to bed and woke at 4.30 and was off again. This reaction lasted as a major thing for three days and Jack was unsettled for at least a week afterwards. Nick strapped Jack into his car seat and spent a lot of time driving around checking the property that weekend! We have never rechallenged this one as Jack himself has no desire to repeat that particular experience and neither have we!!

The clinic sister I went to for Ellen was very supportive of my efforts to unravel the cause of Jack's problems with diet. When I had identified bread as being a huge problem she pointed out that bread did contain a preservative. She did not know anything particular about this preservative and its effects and she only mentioned it because preservatives were believed to be a cause of behaviour problems in children. Unfortunately I didn't take this too seriously at that time - I still believed that they wouldn't put anything this harmful in our "daily bread" and therefore the preservative couldn't be that harmful.

I spent the next year or so thinking our problem was yeast. I also noticed that a lot of Italian food caused major problems and made Jack pale and blobby looking as well as affecting his behaviour.

It was around this time I found and read "Different Kids" and it all began to make sense. What I had been doing as a mixture of the observation that the blander the diet the blander the children, my little clinical-trials-with-one-(or two, three or four) participant(s) and intuition could now be done with structure. I think you saved us another three to four years of misery, money wasting and mucking about.

These days my husband says he feels better and doesn't get headaches any more. I've found I react to many things and I compete with Jack for the most sensitive-in-the-family status. Ellen reacts to salicylates by becoming easily enraged and blaming everyone for everything. She is, by the way, the most un-ADD person I've ever met - highly organised, very logical, and a real old head on young shoulders -very knowing and mature and reasonable. She is also extremely bright and academically gifted especially with maths.

Jack becomes hyper and idiotic and unable to learn when he has more than moderate salicylates in his diet. His salicylate reaction is a rapid-onset-rapid- resolution-type reaction. Amines used to make him irritable and as close to aggressive as he got but these days the reaction takes the form of a migraine. Jack still has academic problems related to his ADD and particularly to his auditory processing disorder. He is on Ritalin for school. I liken it to wearing glasses and tell him his sister wears glasses at school to help her eyes focus and he needs Ritalin to help his mind focus. He takes a very small dose (1 tab then 1/2 tab three hours later) and he finds it very effective. He does not take it at weekends usually although he would have a dose if we were going to do something that required good behaviour despite being bored or to help with a task requiring concentration and organisation such as making a model etc. He also asks for a dose if he his anxious to be on his best behaviour.

We also need to apply behaviour modification techniques on a daily basis - I did a Triple P course and this has been immensely helpful in managing Jack.

To put it simply, our approach to Jack's behaviour and other problems three-tiered one: First comes diet and general good health including adequate sleep and food - this is essential as if his diet, in particular, is off then nothing else is really effective.

Second comes the behaviour modification. I believe a lot of poor behaviour in children is caused by not being able to understand their environment. It seems to me that all effective behaviour modification systems provide not only rewards and punishments but more importantly they organise and simplify the social environment for all players. This consistency enables children who have trouble reading those around them to understand what is happening and they are therefore able to comply.

And thirdly, medication is the icing on the cake. It does cause Jack persistent appetite suppression and sleep problems. (The appetite suppression can be a good thing for parties though as he will only pick at plain chips and have a bit of lemonade if on medication!) Once again thank you so much for your books - and for the great website, and please sign us up for your newsletters, discussion group and kids discussion group! - Alison, Queensland

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