

Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

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("headache" "migraine" keywords only)

[1289] 635: "blinding headache and felt like there were bubbles in his throat" (November 2014)

Well, after 3 months failsafe, my 8 year old son had a terrible reaction to what I suspect was 635. We gave in to Chargrill Charlie's, and within 12 hours, my son was coughing incessantly. He seemed ok to go to school (I didn't recognise what was happening), but I got a call from the school that he was having difficulty breathing. They gave him Ventolin (as per Asthma Attack protocol), and I brought him to the hospital as he was white, sweaty, shaky and very frightened. He later told me he had a blinding headache and felt like there were bubbles in his throat.

His headache dissipated over about 3 days which I treated with Panadol and Nurofen. He was quiet for several days, which is very unlike this energetic boy! - Kathy

(Note that Nurofen is not failsafe; people who react to salicylates usually react to it)

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

I get irritable, frustrated and then a migraine... Megan

[1272] One-liners (August 2014)

Rruugggh after being so careful of my foods I had takeaway tonight and my skin has gone into melt down, bright red itchininess rash I have heart palpitations and a headache within 30 min! MSG is my killer ... Just had to take two antihistamines, two steroids and pain killers. So cross with myself! - Brianna from FB group

[1255] Oppositional Defiance Disorder ODD - thread from facebook (February 2014)

Michelle responds: We have been on the elim diet now since Sept. 13 but were making mistakes and cheating. I think we have now hit a baseline. Thank you everyone for your comments. It is absolutely true...my DS7 didn't have control before over his defiance and it is a blessing that now he can voice his reasons for not wanting to do something. In October we introduced peeled cucumbers and sugar snap peas and he had a headache and lethargic for two days. Ate garlic bread with cheese on New Year's Eve (we are vegetarians, DF, GF) and he wanted to beat up his best friend over something small the next day. However we are going to try challenges again here shortly.

[1234] One-liners (October 2013)

Want to share - thanks to Failsafe strict elimination diet then ongoing challenges since Nov 2012 (dietitians free rural FNQmedicarelocalcare): no migraine, less anxious, less mood swings, decluttered life and home, learning how to be organised, meditate regularly = makeover. :) – Robin Qld

[1223] 200: Sorbate preservatives and migraine and mood disturbance (October 2013)

I just wanted to let you know I tried an Olive Leaf Extract (Tree of Health brand) that contains potassium sorbate (preservative E 202) . I experienced migraines and mood disturbance. I am sensitive to glutamates, but wasn't aware of any sensitivity to sorbates. I have tried other brands of Olive Leaf Extract which I have not had a problem with. I do not have a known salicylate sensitivity. - by email

[1215] One-liners (July 2013)

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

[1203] 635: very unpleasant headache from Campbell's "Chicken & Corn" soup (July 2013)

I am reporting a reaction to a can of Campbell's "Chicken & Corn" condensed soup. The flavour was very pleasant, but an hour or so after consuming it, I developed a very unpleasant headache and eventually felt ill enough to go straight to bed without my usual shower. I was O.K. by next day and didn't develop a rash. My wife, who also enjoyed the soup, was untroubled.

The can was marked in bold type as having no MSG, but I found "Flavour Enhancer (E635) in the list of ingredients. I phoned their Customer Service line and they were quite sympathetic but pointed out that they did list the flavour enhancer amongst the ingredients. As indeed they did, and spelled-out too, not disguised as a yeast extract or something similar. I expressed my opinion that it was somewhat deceptive, though, to label the can as not containing MSG when it did contain a close relative.

A survey of their other soup varieties seemed to show that anything with chicken in it was liable to also include E635, but the vegetable soups such as Cream of Pumpkin, Celery, Asparagus etc were free of it. - Dennis aged 87, by email

[1137] "almost no help from the medical profession" with Sandifer syndrome (September 2012)

I have started on the diet, currently supported by the book and recipe book. So far it is quite delicious despite the lack of our usual foods.

I have been forced to be free of preservative 220+ and flavours 621+ for over 8 yrs now because of debilitating migraines. My children exhibit various learning and attention difficulties which are inconsistent in nature (think Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde). We suspected the little one to have Sandifers (Sandifer syndrome is a paediatric medical disorder, characterised by gastrointestinal symptoms and associated neurological features) as a baby so I went Gluten and Dairy free to help with that and it worked a charm. However I could not figure out if it was the much cleaner diet or the Gluten or Dairy that were a problem. He reacts to flavour enhancers with rashes and difficult behaviour.

Through all our various issues I have had almost no help from the medical profession and when they were trying to help it was usually with reluctance and a lot of talk about how stressed I must be. My hormones, migraines, restless legs and anxiety were always put down to some psychological problem that I knew did not exist. I even had a workers compensation neck and shoulder problem that my then doctor decided was due to stress and not the work desk that I was at. So I have had a gutful of the medical profession and am wary of shelling out more money to specialists.

When I read your book (referred by a friend) I was amazed. It was as though all my symptoms and the boys symptoms were also problems shared by many other people and not a result of my over active imagination. I had suspected our diet for a long time but could not pin it down. I am so grateful just to know that I am not alone in this.

(One week later) On rereading what I have told you it is crazy to think of the issues that I have not even touched on.

This is our second week Failsafe and the seriously awful headaches from the withdrawal seem to have stopped and I am feeling energetic again. I have had a nice comment from the teacher about my middle child - he is being looked at for Asperger's (seriously difficult behaviour) and I thought it would be better to try him on the diet before the \$1000 psychologist visit in November.

The Sandifers is hardly ever diagnosed I think. Many of my friends had babies that had similar

symptoms but were all told they had either reflux or torticollis. I watched one friend's baby who seemed normal on waking but as soon as she fed him the neck would twist to the side just like my baby had. She asked her health professionals about it and they either had not heard of it or discounted it completely. I think that is so terribly sad.

I will get on to a dietician to start the supervised reintroduction of foods. However the amount of support you have provided is so good we hardly need it.

Keep up the great work – you are making a difference! - Shannon by email.

[1127] "I had no idea what was causing the headaches, foggy head, and ringing in my ears" (September 2012)

After going to Sue's talk I have read the Fed Up books and cut out salicylates and glutamates mainly. My headaches have almost disappeared in a week! (I have had a constant headache/migraine basically all year!). I have also had loud ringing in my ears, pressure in my head, pins and needles down my arms and hands, fatigue, foggy brain all symptoms are improving. It's amazing!!

I am definitely feeling a lot better avoiding salicylates (mainly all fruits (except pears) & tomatoes at the moment), amines as much as possible (no supermarket meat and careful choices at the butcher), wine, glutamates (making my own stock instead of using "Campbell's Real stock" (which I thought was ok, I didn't realise yeast extract was bad!) and not using any soy sauces etc). Every time I slip up and have something I shouldn't, I get a headache within 12 – 48 hours later. It's quite easy now to trace it back to something I've eaten, which is a good thing as I had no idea what was causing the headaches, foggy head, and ringing in my ears a few weeks ago. I haven't had any pins and needles in my hands now since eating 'failsafe'.

I have also decided to go 'gluten free'. I have suspected for many years that I could be a little gluten intolerant and avoided eating bread mainly. However, I have noticed that lately oats have been upsetting me too! The gluten free muesli, muesli bars and other recipes in the book are fantastic!

My family are really enjoying all the different recipes that I have been trying and don't seem to be missing tomato based sauces (which we had quite often). We haven't come across a failure yet! I love cooking and trying new ideas. We very rarely have take-away food or packaged, highly processed foods so eating 'failsafe' hasn't been a huge, radical change for us. - Jenny (Melbourne) by email

[1123] 160b: Annatto migraine due to white magnum (September 2012)

We were at the theatre the other night and as usual I was hungry! I decided to go with the white magnum as I know I react to amines and thought this would be the safest bet of what was on offer. The next morning I woke up with an almighty migraine. I had the wrapper in my bag and a quick check of the ingredients and a check on your website and now I have learnt I have another additive I need to avoid - 160b. Thank you so much for all of your fantastic work - it is a somewhat tedious journey ploughing through the challenges but well worth it. I am very grateful for the amazing resource you have provided. – Dawn, NZ

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

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

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

She moved out of college accommodation this last year and has been in a shared house. Her symptoms got worse as the year went on until at the end of last year she was a mess. (I suspect she

was eating 'healthier foods' since moving away from the college.) She didn't want to eat anything as everything she felt all food was the cause of her painful bloating every night, headaches and migraines, not sleeping well (she told me later she was living on panadol and would take sleeping tablets if she had to work early the next day) After Xmas lunch she was in a lot of pain and it was very noticeable she was losing weight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She has been very busy moving, house hunting, and finishing summer school and had some special social engagements so we have not progressed to the challenges. We planned the social events and she went prepared and still enjoyed herself. She was a little bloated (which seems to be her default symptom) but managed well. She will start the challenges when she is settled. We are looking forward to it as we want to have a better idea of what is actually the main culprit. I know it may be more than one. I suspect salicylate sensitivity, flavour enhancers and maybe some preservatives. She certainly doesn't want to avoid food she doesn't have to!

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

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

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

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

If my daughter had been born now I am pretty sure we would have gone through the trials so many parents I have come across in my reading and on the DVD. This probably shows how much our food has changed over the last 20 years. At least parents today have to deal with it early in their child's life. I know this has been difficult for them but I think it is better than our experience as it has been over so many years and during some challenging teenage times for my daughter. Then again I have read of people not getting the answers until their later years and I bet many have never come across the right answers.

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

[1091] One-liners (January 2012)

Your books, dvd, etc were recommended by a local pediatrician after we spent a night in hospital with our 3 year old who was suffering from a migraine - no migraines since we eliminated oranges and chocolate. We also do our best to eliminate, where possible all the numbers, especially the flavour enhancers. - Michael, NSW

[1089] Soy and lentils contributed to migraines (January 2012)

I emailed you some time ago about my chronic migraines. After having been to GPs, specialists, naturopaths, etc, I went to a dietitian. She gave me the booklet produced by the Royal Prince Alfred

Allergy unit. I also purchased your book, "Fed Up". This letter is to give you an update because it has good success.

Until recently I had no relief from those persistent migraines and was getting really desperate - again! Yet I knew there was something I was eating that did not like me - or rather my system did not like it. I was concerned my protein intake was a bit low, and not being into lentils, and because they are listed in the booklet as low in amines and salicylates, I decided to try some red lentils boiled, and had a nice helping one afternoon for lunch. That night - 12.15am - I experienced a most horrific headache in my brain like the blood vessels wanted to burst! Knowing that the migraine medication works on blood vessels I had an imigran which helped settle the reaction somewhat. If it had got any worse I would've phoned for an ambulance because it was a bit frightening.

Later that week when I had recovered from the after-effects of what I knew to be the lentils, I went looking on the internet. Anyway to cut a long story short, to my amazement, the low or restricted tyramine diet for persons on MAOI drugs lists lentils and soy as high in tyramine*. Many years ago, my doctor prescribed a MAOI for a few months to help me over a bit of a rough patch, and I was told to not have "cheese, vegemite and broad beans". Anyway, being a lover of cheeses at the time, and being deprived of one of my favourite foods for some weeks, I thought, "hey! surely a little half-inch cube wouldn't hurt....". Well I'll tell you now that it did hurt!!! That evening I had the most horrific and frightening experience in the brain that truly felt like every blood vessel in the brain was going to explode with blood all over the ceiling. I was so ill and frightened. The experience I had after the lentils was the exact type I had with the cheese while taking the MAOI.

Now I was onto something ... I went through the foods that I had been consuming regularly over these past years and saw that the full cream powdered milk contains emulsifier from soy!!! The only time I ever ate soy beans was about 15 years ago, and I was violently ill after eating them. Didn't think much about it at the time, just didn't like the soy flavour and even now the smell of things like soy turn me off. I have the same reaction to chick peas. After reading the soy stories on your website (in particular [\[314\]](#) and [\[702\]](#) - what they have said - discovered by personal experience - I can confirm by my own experience.) It certainly helps to unravel the mystery of my on-going migraines. And I am not surprised that my migraines were aggravated when I had Sustagen or Ensure as supplements - they contain soy derivatives. I even checked out baby food formulas and they too contain soy.

The multi-vitamin/mineral supplement I have been taking also contains soy - the vitamin E is derived from soy. The company was really understanding when I explained the situation, and very kindly refunded me the money. The soy was not listed as an ingredient, because the vitamin was derived from it.

Since stopping having powdered milk (I used it to bolster up my normal milk, most of the time) **I have not had a migraine headache from foods.**

I am aware that I still am prone to migraines from environmental factors - odours, (funnily enough the odours that trigger an instant migraine are those foods high in amines, like strong tomatoes, spicy foods, fermented foods etc), stormy weather, sensory overload (flashing lights, etc).

This is a great find for me. To experience a head that does not wake up every morning in "migraine mode", and have confidence in eating foods that are low in amines, I can be a lot more relaxed about eating. It has given me so much relief - almost unbelievable!!! - Patricia, NSW (* RPAH researchers do not agree that legumes are high in amines and nor do the majority of amine sensitive failsafers. All legumes are listed as low in amines except broad beans which are very high; however lentils and other legumes do contain other natural chemicals that could cause problems e.g. purines which can be associated with gout – Sue)

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

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

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

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

[1079] 220-228: Anaphylaxis due to sulfite preservatives (December 2011)

The main problem that I have had to deal with for over 30 years is the use of sulfite preservatives. I have had at least 5 instances of anaphylaxis, with three events that landed me in the emergency room. I do not have asthma, nor am I particularly abnormally allergy-prone (other than seasonal hay fever, and the few foods and medications of which I am intolerant), but sulfites in wines give me excruciating 2-3 day migraines, and the amount used on non-fresh shrimp has given me several life-threatening encounters that required 6+ hours under the care of a number of very, VERY uneasy emergency room doctors. – Geoffrey by email, USA

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

'I had severe migraines all my life. Then I came to a talk eight years ago – as a stall worker, not to learn anything. During the evening, I realised that my migraines were due to amines in my favourite foods - chocolate, cheese, avocado and cheesecake. Now I avoid those and I don't have migraines any more'.

[1023] Victoria's CFS & perfume sensitivity story (May 2011) COURAGE AWARD

My daughter Victoria is now 13 years old. When she was five she became very unwell with a gastro bug and was quite ill for three weeks (vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea). The sensation of nausea did not go away after she recovered. After some weeks we were referred to a paediatrician who diagnosed nervous dyspepsia. I knew this was not right and asked to be referred to a gastroenterologist. The GP reluctantly did so. The paed gastro specialist did an endoscopy and found a helicobacter ulcer which was then treated with antibiotics. Unfortunately the nausea remained, and diarrhoea started to become more of a problem.

We were referred to a dietitian who dealt with intolerances and followed her elimination diet to the letter with very little improvement. I understand now that this dietitian's diet was quite relaxed and included many foods in the moderate category (yoghurt, mangoes, just ripe bananas, Colby cheese etc). We abandoned the diet after three months and just ate home-cooked plainish food with no artificial additives (this did include a range of organic fruit and veg).

For the next six or so years we battled with Victoria's health. The tummy problems continued (nausea, diarrhoea). Her immune system was poor (she caught everything going around). She was irritable, impatient and not affectionate. She constantly had dark circles under her eyes. And then about three years ago she began to suffer frequent headaches mainly sinus ones. She was just never

well.

We went everywhere and did everything to try to help her (blood tests, acupuncturist, paediatric allergist, naturopath, eye tests, physiotherapist, ear/nose/throat specialist you name it we did it with no improvement).

Now it is relevant to talk about myself for a moment. For 20 years I have had turns where after eating out I would become really unwell. This was usually at a restaurant. First I get nausea, then feel faint and break out in a cold sweat followed by vomiting or diarrhoea or both. Sometimes I do actually faint. Even though we had not had any success with the early (relaxed) elimination diet I did learn about food chemicals at this time, and realised that it was ultra high-amine foods that I was reacting to (e.g. camembert cheese followed by aged beef with wine gravy etc).

Now cut back to mid last year one evening I prepared a meal of very fresh roast organic chicken (with skin) and homemade gravy, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and peas. After eating some of her meal, Victoria had a similar reaction to the ones I described above. This was the first time she had had the same type of turn as me. I recognised that this meal was high in amines (but not too high for me) and realised that amines were a problem for her.

So then I read your books and went to a new dietitian (dealing with intolerances) and discovered that Victoria needs to eat a diet low in all food chemicals. If she does stay absolutely strict she is reasonably well. The nausea problem has reduced dramatically, as has the diarrhoea. She is less irritable and more affectionate. Her headaches have reduced. Her immunity is better. We have seen a real improvement!

Her diet is very limited. (Unfortunately, she is also intolerant to raffinose, so she can't even eat all the vegies in the low category!) We have to get our meat from a butcher who phones me the day the beef arrives from the abattoir, and I go that day and buy (and freeze) meat for the next month. She is very sensitive.

Victoria's sinus headache problem is certainly affected by food chemicals - it has improved quite a lot on the elimination diet, but a whole range of environmental allergens seem to trigger it too. The grass being cut affects her. Walking through the detergent aisle in the supermarket affects her. The smell of perfume and cosmetics affects her. Household chemicals affect her. Some particular irritants:

- Hairspray and other spray-on hair products: She feels an urgent need to remove herself from the smell of these products. She feels she can taste them and they cause her a serious headache. We can't go to a normal hairdressing salon - she says they are toxic. We have our hair cut at a home salon and the hairdresser doesn't use any products on us.
- Dust: she is aware of dust if it is around and finds it unpleasant because it irritates her nose, but it is not until later that she develops a sinus headache. These headaches can be quite bad and last for many days.
- Perfumes/aromatherapy scents: these smells are all really distasteful to her. She feels nauseous and headachy in environments that are scented. She has a strong feeling that she needs to leave.
- Garden smells and pollens: she is very aware of them - they make her nose feel sneezy and occasionally she develops a headache.
- The smell of clothes washing detergent and other cleaners are most distasteful to Victoria. The skin on her face flushes and feels irritated, and she develops a headache if exposed to the smell for more than a couple of minutes. For washing sheets and pillow cases I often just use a hot water cycle with no detergent and dry them in the sun. They look and smell clean to us. For washing clothes I use the skin care cycle on our machine which uses more water and does an extra rinse, and just use a little OMO Sensitive or Earth Choice Sensitive. Once again, things come out clean, even with less detergent. We can't detect a fragrance after

washing and drying in the sun.

- If we happen to wear a garment that has been washed in normal fragrant powder for whatever reason, we both feel unwell and get a headache. I developed a very severe headache that lasted for days once (years ago) as I had lent a shirt to someone and they returned it after washing it in normal detergent and using Fabulon during the ironing process. I foolishly wore it to work and became so unwell and dizzy that I had to go home sick! We ourselves use Mitchum unscented deodorant, QV non soap alternative, Bod ultrasensitive fragrance free shampoo and conditioner purchased online from Biome or Simple shampoo and Conditioner ordered in by our local pharmacy.
- Victoria notices and dislikes the smell of petrol, cigarette smoke and basically anything else with a strong smell.
- Oppressive humid weather gives Victoria (and her grandmother) a sinus headache.

I suffer from sinus headaches too, and all of the above affect me, but I am not nearly as sensitive. Victoria and I both have a fantastic sense of smell. We can both smell cigarette smoke from a neighbour smoking in his back yard four big house blocks away. We are both super sensitive to food smells as well, especially protein foods (which of course comes in very handy with catering for an amine responder!)

One of the many specialists we have taken Victoria to is a paediatric allergist. She took one look at Victoria and commented that she looked like an allergy sufferer. She noticed (amongst other things) the dark circles under Victoria's eyes and a wrinkle or line across her nose that indicated constant rubbing of her nose. Victoria was tested for a wide range of commons allergens, but the skin prick tests did not reveal allergy. The specialist said that she was surprised, and recommended Victoria use a saline nasal spray (which she does) and use antihistamines when needed as she may be allergic to things other than what she was tested for.

The whole body load issue is certainly relevant for Victoria. How badly she responds to irritating food and smells certainly varies according to the load on her body school stress, PMT, illness etc. She is definitely doing better on a diet of all low chemical foods, but it does not take much to upset her balance.

When Victoria is not doing well she feels overstimulated very easily by light, noise, smells (of course) and other stimulants. She also has poor volume control at such times, even though she is usually a quiet girl. Another recurring problem is urinary tract irritation not pain or burning just a constant feeling of needing to dash to the loo.

I have two other things I wanted to mention (for what they are worth):

- Victoria is gifted. She was accelerated a whole grade in primary school and excels academically. I nearly choked on my tea when I read in one of your books that we 'should not blame bad behaviour on giftedness' - I had been blaming her prickliness, impatience and irritability with others on giftedness to some degree.
- We have very recently discovered that Victoria's blood levels of Vitamin D are in the normal range (55), but only barely. Our dietitian (from the failsafe list) says that in her opinion the bare minimum should be 75 and we should be aiming for 100. She says that recent overseas research indicates that there is a link between intolerances and low vitamin D levels. We are trying to get Victoria into the sun for safe periods every day to improve this, and will test again in 3 months ...

Update 3 months later: We have actually been faring better over the last month or so. We had a re-test for vitamin D levels and to our surprise discovered that despite trying to increase sun-exposure, Victoria's levels were still at the low-normal level of 55 (normal range is 50-300). Our dietitian had suggested previously that we should aim for higher than 100. So I decided to try a failsafe vitamin D

capsule. I don't know if that has helped, or it is just a co-incidence, but after a couple of weeks Victoria seems to be back to faring quite well on the low-chemical diet. I am cautiously optimistic.

What a long story - and this is only a small part of it! Thanks very much for your wonderful work. Your books and website are fantastic. I am very grateful. - Carol, 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 immunosuppressant) 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

[985] Annatto 160b: head banging now headaches in a 6 yo (March 2011)

My son started head banging at 6 months old with the introduction of solids (an all natural yoghurt with 'no artificial colours or preservatives' – but it did contain annatto). He has grown out of head banging but if he eats annatto by mistake now he suffers from headaches. – Jo, ACT

[973] Ulcerated tongue improves on diet (October 2010)

My son (aged 4) is very food intolerant. His symptoms include nose bleeds, ulcerated tongue, grumpyness, headaches, oppositional defiance symptoms and the list goes on. My daughter (aged 7) suffers from stomach aches, headaches and ulcerated tongue - although not as bad. We have followed the elimination diet in the past and have had success. But after being off the diet for 6 months both children's tongues are ulcerated again ...

[964] One-liners (October 2010)

I had some bacon the other day and sure enough, the next day I had a migraine. First time in a long time. That has confirmed to me that this is definitely a trigger for my migraines. I also had pre-migraine thirst and a craving for sugary food. – by email

[956] Feedback after two years on failsafe (August 2010)

Our family have been following the Fed Up books for over 2 years now for a 5 year old daughter who was reacting severely with rashes on her face & body & a son whose doctor wanted to prescribe ADHD medication.

I can happily report that our daughter is rash-free and in fact after 7 years she doesn't even have eczema anymore. I believe her immune system has improved dramatically since being mostly failsafe. She is a healthy beautiful clear-skinned little girl with a good resistance to illnesses these days. My son is also progressing well with a mostly failsafe diet and fish oils to help with concentration. (our biggest problems - artificial colours & preservatives & in my daughter case - corn as well).

Just as an aside to this story - I put up with dreadful headaches every day for about 15 years, along with the headaches I got muscle cramps in my neck & shoulders. I was on a muscle relaxant for years until visiting a chiropractor. I went off the medication but after some weeks had a return of the problem after eating bacon & ham.....I am now convinced it was nitrates that were giving me the problem, and I have proven it a couple of times since. I have read about headaches & nitrates but can't find anything on it affecting the muscles - for years I thought I was just being uptight!! - Julie by email

[946] 160b, 635: Poisoning my family with 635 and annatto (October 2010)

When I started to really read food labels, I was horrified by the fact that I was poisoning our whole family - especially with 635 and annatto. You asked me how we are affected by these additives.

635 - Myself (main symptom is migraines): dried, red lips. It looks like I have lipstick on. I feel dehydrated and get migraine style headaches. Photosensitivity in my sight. Lethargy. Unfulfilled feeling of thirst. Frequent urination that seems very diluted. My 4 yo son (main symptom is defiance): dried, red lips also. Dehydration and thirst. Frequent urination. Sooky or whingy type of demeanor. My 2 yo daughter (main symptom is urticaria): After having a piece of bacon the size of a 10 cent piece, it sent her into massive hives. It seemed like she had a headache or faceache and she screamed at a high pitch and then cried for about 20 mins. I nearly called an ambulance. Very out of character for her and she barely cries for more than a minute normally. Our 635 foods were French Onion Soup Powder – I would use in casseroles, potato bake, soups - Smiths brand Crisps, sausages from the butcher, tinned soup such as Spring Lamb with Vegetables, and takeaway BBQ Chicken and chips.

Annatto (160b) - Myself: insomnia, anxiousness, a shaky type of sensation sometimes - a bit hard to articulate it but its sort of like I have a vibration or fluttering going on in my body. I "snap" easily and it does not take much to make me get angry. My son: Difficulty falling asleep. Disturbed night sleeps. Silly behaviour and noises like a monkey (jumps around, clumsy, unable to sit still and focus for longer than 5 mins). Sometimes aggressive with no apparent trigger. Unpredictable around other children. My daughter: disturbed sleep. She was a good sleeper but started to go away from her past pattern of falling asleep by herself and changed into shorter sleeps and waking often at night. Once we took it out of her diet she started to sleep through the night and sleeps for a solid 2 hour stint during her day nap. Our annatto foods were Kraft singles, yoghurts (with Bob the Builder) and ice cream. – Rose, by email

[942] 621: Supraventricular Tachycardia (October 2010)

Over the past 15 years I have suffered from numerous things - CFS, IBS, Supraventricular Tachycardia, rosacea and itchiness. Post 2000, things were going along fairly okay CFS wise but I developed the

SVT after the birth of my son in 2003. I had this corrected in 2007 (very long diagnosis!) but still continued to suffer the odd palpitation here and there. My IBS started in 1999 and I would swing from constipation to diarrhoea. My rosacea had been with me since 1997 and nothing would take it away. The itchiness started in 2008 and so did the headaches.

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

[934] Teeth grinding in a 6 yo due to amines (September 2010)

My daughter has had migraines since the age of 3. She has always complained of 'sore legs'. She has had problems with nasal congestion & had been using Rhinocourt nasal spray daily and has always been a nail biter & a teeth grinder at night. On day 2 of the Amine challenge, she got a migraine, droopy eyes, became listless, and a fever.

She stayed unwell for several days with the headache. During the challenge, she also got a blocked nose, sore tummy, sore nose, nightmares & was badly constipated. Since the end of the Amine challenge (nearly 3 months) we haven't had one migraine! No more snotty nose or blocked nose, nasal sprays, nightmares, sore tummys, teeth grinding, nail biting - her nails are growing for the 1st time in her life - or sore legs. Soooooooo, No more Amines for my daughter! Since eating failsafe we have never looked back! - Tanya, by email

[924] One-liners (June 2010)

I have your *Failsafe Cookbook* as well as *Friendly Food* and have already saved money on medication for migraines that I have suffered from all my life and which have just gone away in a matter of weeks. – by email, Qld

[920] 635: Headaches and aching shoulders from flavour enhancers (June 2010)

I have been having a reaction to Aldi's Vegetable Flavour Stock cubes. I am basically on a fresh healthy diet but stock cubes were my one weakness and I thought not that bad as they state "No Added MSG". I now know this is rubbish. Every time I cook with these my shoulders would ache all night and into the next morning and I would also get a headache. I finally worked out that it was linked to the stock cubes. The ingredients include Yeast Extract, and Flavour Enhancers 627 & 631. - Deb, by email

[913] 160b: Jack's head banging and annatto (June 2010)

My son Jack, now aged 4, was a great baby, he slept 18 hours a day and was joy to be around except that he would not use his bowels for days and days. We took him to doctor after specialist after scan and no-one knew why. In the end the only way we could get him to use his bowels was to medicate him every day.

Also at about 6 months (at the time of introduction of solids) Jack started head-butting the cot. Honestly I am not exaggerating when I tell you that he had golf ball sized lumps on his forehead – again more scans, tests and drs. No-one knew why. The professionals told me to take him out of a cot and put him into a bed so he couldn't forward head-butt. Great Idea – he then proceeded to get out of bed and backward head-butt the wall. I have holes in the gyprock in the wall where he would head-butt his way through the gyprock. One night it was that hard the hinges in the door popped out. My neighbours could hear it and if I was on the phone people could hear it. It would mainly happen during the night or when he woke up from a day sleep. People told me he was hot, cold,

tired, not stimulated enough, over stimulated, lonely blah blah blah.

I decided none of the professionals were helping so I decided one by one to withdraw foods from his diet. I started with dairy – I removed 95% of the dairy from his diet – I allowed him 1 cup of milk and 1 yoghurt a day and this showed a massive improvement, he would use his bowels without medication - it still required a lot of effort on his part but hey it was better than medication and the headbutting decreased. I took yoghurt off him and amazingly enough my happy little man returned. At the time I did not realise the importance of this find (that there was annatto in his favourite yoghurt).

One year later I gave him his favourite vanilla yoghurt with 160B in it and OH MY GOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! He was up on all 4s rocking all night headbutting the pillow moaning and the next morning he woke up with a headache. We let it go a week and then we tried it with icecream and he was the same only this time he was reverse headbutting the wall like he used to do when he was a baby. – Nicolle, NSW

[895] 621: Lifelong severe migraines due to MSG and other flavour enhancers (February 2010)

I have suffered from bad migraines nearly all of my life. My mother said I was only about 4 when they started (or when I could tell them my head hurt).

I used to have about 4-5 per month, usually lasting 1-3 days. They always start with my vision going first. If it goes in the right eye, the pain will be on the left and vice versa, after that comes I get extreme pain and vomiting. I cannot stand to be touched or be around any noise or light, even dull light, the vision usually rights itself in about 3 hours, I have to lie still in a quiet and dark room with a washer on my head. I've been on various medications over the years and had my GP sent me for an MRI last year when my vision in my left eye didn't restore itself for 5 days.

When we put the kids on failsafe eating, I followed it in front of the kids but not at work etc. I decided to go failsafe and challenge myself when I realised there was something to the foods we are eating these days, after what I'd seen with the kiddies. I didn't get any symptoms when challenging with amines, salicylates etc, but found it's only when I eat things like flavoured chips, noodles, those bouillon stock cubes, ham and processed meats and foods like that. HVP is certainly one of the things that set my migraines off.

I have eaten several things while I was challenging and I'd always end up without fail with a migraine, so it is most definitely the food or what is in the foods.

Just before Christmas I ate some noodles from our local noodle bar that opened up, I phoned them and asked if they use MSG, they said no, I should have asked if they used any flavour enhancers and/or MSG, I ended up off work for 2 days and had to get a colleague to take the kids to before school care and my husband to pick them up. When I phoned them back and asked if they use flavour enhancers, they after some prodding, said yes they did, "but it was legal". I assured them I knew it was legal, but they should disclose that to their customers.

I'm sure these people don't realise that people who suffer from migraines suffer from disturbed vision, extreme headaches, vomiting or nausea, light sensitivity, noise sensitivity and it impacts on all who are around them, you can't move, you can't do anything with the kids, you can't work, you can't drive, you can't cook, you effectively are incapacitated by the migraine until it subsides.

I've decided to eat exactly what the kids eat, I've explained to my colleagues at work and they are totally fine with it, I just take my lunch when we go out now, and if the restaurant or pub bucks up, like a certain one did just last week, about me taking my own food, the other 18 of them stand up as if to leave and say "fine, we'll take our business elsewhere, she has dietary issues". It's great support. They backed down last week, it was great!!! - Kylie, NSW

[894] 621: MSG headaches in an 8 year old (February 2010)

My 8 yo granddaughter was getting headaches three times a week or more. Sometimes they were so

bad she had to take time off school and lie down. After we watched your DVD we looked at what she was eating and realised the headaches came after she ate pies, party pies, flavoured noodles - anything with flavour enhancers. So we stopped eating them. Now we know - if she doesn't eat flavour enhancers, she doesn't get headaches. - Terry, NSW

[871] 635: Severe asthma-type reaction to 635 (November 2009)

I have been aware of an intolerance to MSG (621) for many years and mainly suffer with severe headaches, dehydration and nausea. I steer clear of any preservatives and flavour enhancers wherever possible, particularly those with #6 at the beginning. My diet rarely incorporates any packaged or prepared canned foods, I have eaten take away food but not on a regular basis. In a previous life, I did eat packaged and prepared foods!

A few years ago, whilst a friend was cooking a store bought, marinated chicken dish, I suffered blocked nose, mucous throat and headache, not from eating, but being in the surrounding area.

A few weeks ago I suffered another episode of severely blocked nose, thick mucous in throat and tightness in throat/chest, almost wheezing like an asthmatic. The symptoms started within 10 minutes of eating a Campbells "Chunky" Chicken & Vegetable, Curry with Rice meal in a tin left behind by a guest. Although it claims "No Added MSG No Artificial Flavours No Added Preservatives" it does contain 635. This is my first reaction to 635 as far as I am aware. I am a fit and healthy 54 year old and don't have asthma. I will certainly be checking for this number now. - Lee, WA

[856] Hotdog headaches from school (2002)

I was wondering if you could shed some light on how to rid my 9yr old daughters headaches that she has had nearly every Thursday all year, sometimes so bad she has to stay home from school. The doctor said does she hate school but she doesn't. (Answer: It is very common for people to have recurring headaches on a particular day of the week. What do they eat the day before? In this case, the school canteen sold hotdogs only on Wednesdays. When the hotdogs stopped, the headaches stopped. - S) – by email, SA

[842] Non-allergic rhinitis from salicylates and dairy (August 2009)

Some years ago I was suffering from severe sinus headaches, so much so that I saw an Ear Nose and Throat specialist who diagnosed non-allergic rhinitis and referred me to a neurologist for the headaches. The neurologist referred me back to the ENT specialist, so I was left nowhere to go. I continued to suffer from these headaches as well as several bouts of sinusitis each year. It turns out that for me salicylates and dairy are probably the culprits and I have not needed any antibiotics since last September, when I started failsafe. I thought it might worth telling you this, as I was just reading your factsheet about hayfever and allergic rhinitis. I think it applies equally to non-allergic rhinitis - Joanne by email. (see updated [Factsheet on rhinitis etc](#))

[836] Headaches just stopped dead after 9 years! (July 2009)

For 20 years I have suffered headaches, daily. Rarely a day goes by when I haven't had one, often quite severe. There's not a practitioner or therapist that I have not seen or test that hasn't been done. Pain management is what I accepted my life to be. I trusted that all these experts knew that there was no identifiable cause. No one ever suggested it may be diet related!!! I didn't consider it either as I ate a healthy diet! Even after reading Fed Up and the Failsafe Cookbook, I wasn't expecting my world to be turned around.

After 3 weeks failsafe: I haven't had a headache since last Thursday. It has been nearly 9 years since I went a whole week without a headache. Given my history, there's no way that this is coincidental especially given that my headaches have been quite severe for a couple of months. They didn't just lessen in severity slowly, they just stopped dead! ...Failsafe is no sacrifice. I am not missing out. For the last 20 years I have been missing out and making sacrifices to my quality of life ... almost everyone I know now knows my brief experience and I will continue to spread the word! I keep

saying to myself if only more people knew

After 16 months failsafe ...Without a doubt, food is the cause of my headaches! I am now trying to find the main culprits and find a balance as my tolerance threshold is very hard to determine. I completed the elimination diet as recommended by the RPA Allergy unit. The Failsafe Cookbook and Friendly Food cookbooks were great. For inspiration and a bit of variety, I also modified many cookbook and magazine recipes. It took me ages to do the challenges because I felt so good and didn't want to upset the apple cart. I was completely Failsafe and felt really good. One day however, I met up with an old friend and I decided "what the heck, I'll have that piece of chocolate cake and wash it down with an iced chocolate!" The next day I woke up feeling sluggish and I had a headache! I decided to do the challenges so I could determine what the real cause was so I could resume eating anything that didn't affect me. Firstly, I challenged salicylates with no adverse affects. I was expecting amines to be the culprit after what I had read and because of my chocolate cake experience. The next challenge was amines. I indulged in large amounts of chocolate and other amine rich foods as per the RPA diet recommendations. To my surprise and disappointment, there was no immediate reaction. About a week or two later, the headaches came back with a vengeance and lasted for about a month. (Incidentally, I have always had different and worse headaches with my periods. While Failsafe, the period headaches were minor to insignificant.)

After the amine challenge and returning to failsafe, the headaches eventually disappeared. I reintroduced salicylate foods to my diet. I began becoming less strict with amine rich foods as well, like the occasional use of tomatoes in a pasta sauce with a sprinkle of cheese, eating nuts, drinking cola, beer and champagne. The problem is that I don't get an immediate reaction after eating something so I don't know exactly what or how much is too much. I figure that I have a threshold that I can build up to. Once that threshold is reached however, the headache can be weeks long, even though I feel that I have just tipped the scales. The good thing is that I know I can go out and not have to make a special off the menu order. I choose the least risky, but if it's going to contain amines, I just keep to low amines at home for a while to balance things out. Chocolate, cheese and red wine seem to be definite no-nos, but most other things I can handle in small amounts stretched over time. We recently went on a holiday to Victoria. I wanted to enjoy myself and remain headache free. I also wanted to enjoy eating out without fussing too much, so about a month prior, I went almost strictly amine free. Whilst on holiday, I was fairly headache free with only the occasional minor one, even at the MCG with 85000 roaring people! I knew that the delayed affect might occur, but I was prepared to deal with that when I got home and it wasn't too bad in the end. It's just about finding balance, but I know if I want to be completely headache free, I just return to Failsafe.

Now that I have control over my headaches, I have returned to study and recently completed 80 hours of work experience as a Teacher Assistant in a noisy classroom. I feared that the stress and noise would make my head sensitive and more prone to headaches, but I was so surprised to reach the end of the day and think "I didn't have one today!". There were only 2 afternoons that I had to resort to pain relief. Before Failsafe, I could not have contemplated study or work outside the home. Now I am considering going beyond being a Teacher Assistant and returning to uni to complete a Dip Ed and teach. – Sharyn, by email.

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

- I went through 3 courses of antibiotics for sinus problems before I realised they weren't helping. When I read your book, I started the elimination diet the next day. Within three days the sinus problem completely disappeared - I had had a runny nose, and headache for seven weeks prior to that! It was clear proof to myself and my mum that something pretty big was happening when I ate certain foods.

[826] 621: 635: Headaches from 621, asthma-type reaction to 635 (July 2009)

I have been aware of an intolerance to MSG (621) for many years and mainly suffer with severe

headaches, dehydration and nausea. I steer clear of any preservatives and flavour enhancers wherever possible, particularly those with #6 at the beginning. My diet rarely incorporates any packaged or prepared canned foods, I have eaten take away food but not on a regular basis. In a previous life, I did eat packaged and prepared foods!

A few years ago, whilst a friend was cooking a store bought, marinated chicken dish, I suffered blocked nose, mucous throat and headache, not from eating, but being in the surrounding area.

I recently suffered an episode of severely blocked nose, thick mucous in throat and tightness in throat/chest, almost wheezing like an asthmatic. The symptoms started within 10 minutes of eating a Campbells "Chunky" Chicken & Vegetable, Curry with Rice meal in a tin left behind by a guest. Although it claims "No Added MSG No Artificial Flavours No Added Preservatives" it does contain 635. This is my first reaction to 635 as far as I am aware. I am a fit and healthy 54 year old and don't have asthma. I will certainly be checking for this number now. - Lee, WA

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

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

[804] Fragrance free spray on deodorant for fussy hubby makes a difference (June 2009)

Just a quick note to say thanks! I react very badly to any synthetic style fragrances and hubby refuses to use a roll on. My pharmacy ordered in the QV unscented spray deodorant you recommended and fussy hubby has used it no problems. I also bought the Schick sensitive shave gel (unscented) that was mentioned in the newsletter (Big W stocks it). No more headaches, watery eyes and sneezing for me in the morning now. WooHoo! – Danielle, by email

[782] Morning sickness and other symptoms in mother and children due to diet (June 2009)

We only found out about "Fed Up With Food Additives" when Maternal & Child Health nurse suggested we look at a possible problem with food chemicals for our youngest child's (14 months) eating disorder. However, now that I think about it, I was violently ill during my pregnancies after eating high salicylate foods - particularly broccoli, cucumber and citrus fruits – even the smell of these foods would make me queasy.

My IBS symptoms have cleared up since I have reduced the number of high salicylate foods in my diet (I was doing it for the kids so also have adjusted my husband's diet and my own). I used to think I was doing the right thing by eating a huge fruit salad every day, and wondered why my digestive system was so messed up. I have also suffered from a hives-like rash all over my thighs for the past few years and couldn't work it out - I now have long rash free periods after avoiding dried fruit as much as possible, as well as msg, yeast extract, 627, 635 etc. We avoid additives as much as possible but occasionally I slip up and we really notice the effects now.

My 9 year old daughter seems to become very vague and forgetful with amines - especially cheese - and we have found our 3 year old son to react badly to glutamates - he becomes quite aggressive and uncontrollable. The other thing we have noticed is the effect of colours - my daughter becomes very silly and hyperactive - for example, today she had a 'slushie' at the local shops that a family member bought for her - tonight she is jumping all over the house, falling off chairs, making silly noises and facial expressions etc. But I'm sure you've heard all of this before!

I have found the effects on my kids particularly interesting, as when I was a child, I was unable to have food with MSG (I got severe migraines including vomiting) and red-coloured foods/cordial made me vomit badly. Thank you so much for really making a difference to our lives. – Michelle by email

[700] One-liners (November 2008)

- I recently brought some 'Pledge Grab it Orange Citrus scent' use-once dusting cloths because I couldn't find the unscented ones, and I didn't think these would be too bad, but they were. Very strong smelling and gave me a headache. I should have just stuck with the wet dishcloth for dusting.
– by email

[698] 635: rash, headache, asthma, rhinitis in 8 yo due to the 635 flavour enhancers (November 2008)

Three years ago, my son who is now 11 began getting rashes, headaches, always tired, mild asthma, allergic rhinitis, even his personality changed. He had a very bad allergic reaction once to a bought breakfast, but was not hospitalised. My doctor is great and referred him to a paediatrician who specialised in allergies.

I did elimination diets (wheat and dairy) and the rest of it as suggested by the doctor, however it wasn't until I started going through all of the labels that I found this 635 number in soup which he loved, and I and the doctor thought was relatively healthy. It wasn't on my list of additives, so I searched on the internet and found your website.

I then found flavour enhancers in many different foods and just eliminated them - all of the 6XX numbers. The worst was probably chicken noodle soup/ chicken & corn soup, which my son loved. It is an ongoing process as I find it pops up everywhere in foods which you may think are 'healthy', I must read the label even on brands I have bought before as they change, meat and chickens etc. It is also frustrating when things are labelled plain/natural/NO MSG as it makes it difficult for my son and anyone else. I must ask when buying take away as I find they add it to chips, without you asking for it or telling you.

When he had the soup his reaction was quite evident and within a few hours of having it - rashes, headache, rolling on the floor ... He once came home sick and with a massive headache - I later found he had had chips labelled 'natural' but with flavour enhancers.

My son was quite happy to stop eating these foods as he was much happier without them. I think children are much more rational about this than adults. I now cook my own chickens, soup, pies and go to a butcher who is happy to give me additive free meat.

I know it is difficult to cover everything but I think it important to eliminate flavour enhancers as a first step and for doctors to suggest this, as eliminating milk and wheat (which is what we did first) is much more difficult and has nutritional consequences, while flavour enhancers provide no nutrition. It is not something that is tested for in the blood test/scratch test. – *Chris, by email*

[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]

[671] Extreme reaction to local anaesthetic (September 2008)

On the second day of school, my 12-year-old cut his knee badly exposing the tendons. The doctor said he had to really pump him full of anaesthetic as it was so bad. The effects seemed to really throw him out. Instead of getting physical though as he would have a few years ago, he brought it into himself. He just sobbed his heart out and couldn't talk. He had very bad headaches and the shakes. He slept non-stop for about two days before we started getting him back on track. At school the teacher said that my son had been so happy before but after his accident he turned into into a sullen, seldom speaking young lad. - *by email, Qld* [Local including dental anaesthetic injections usually contain preservatives that can cause worse problems when injected than consumed by mouth. It is possible to get preservative-free local anaesthetics if you ask - S]

[648] Migraines a thing of the past (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

[461] Xmas reaction: I knew there was something wrong (November 2006)

My story started with an uncontrollable daughter who at 8 years of age was already getting suspended from school and was a horrible bully. The school wrote me a referral to a paediatrician. At the time I thought would only mean having her medicated to control her which I was dead set against.

I have two older boys that were very well behaved so I wanted to find the cause of the problem and not just cover it up with medication. Three days after Christmas 2002 my daughter went off to such a degree that all I could do was hold on to her while she bit, kicked and screamed until she was physically exhausted. That was when I knew there was something seriously wrong so I went to see a child psychologist who fortunately for me recommended your book Fed Up.

Within a month I went from thinking my daughter was destined for jail to thinking what a lovely young girl she is turning into. The results were noticeable that quickly. And from my daughter's point of view she felt better within herself. She was no longer on an emotional roller coaster every day. Because of how she felt on the diet it made it easy to keep her on it. She was feeling a whole lot more in control of herself.

Since cleaning out our cupboards I noticed that my eldest boy no longer suffered migraines and no longer took so long with gut aches on the toilet. So obviously he also was affected by these chemicals but in a different manner than my uncontrollable daughter ... – by email, NT See more at <http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/symptom-factsheets/headaches-and-migraines>

[632] Affected by fragrances – 4 reports (February 2008)

Fragrances have been my bugbear for years, and I find if I go anywhere where there are fragrances, I am usually 'unwell' for 2 - 3 days afterward depending on the length of time of exposure. As a consequence, I try to avoid doing my shopping myself, and also avoid attending church in the hot weather, as this increases the effects of the fragrances in the air. – Merryn, Vic

When I was a child I used to be unreasonably uncomfortable when in the hairdresser, and could not handle being around people with strong deodorant or aftershave or perfume, and I still can't. - Michael (now 25), NSW

I always get a rash from perfumes but never suspected that perfume could be the cause of my headaches too, until I read your website. - Marilyn, Qld

I read in your newsletter about a mum who has trouble with her kids when she enters shops and toilets – in the past I have bought various 'Impulse' type body sprays, and within a few minutes I feel anxious and very touchy. – Michelle, by email

[611] 160b: Migraine, headbanging and violence from annatto 160b (February 2008)

Through the elimination diet and challenges we found out that annatto 160b causes a severe reaction in our 7 year old daughter. Symptoms include migraine, loss of fine motor control, head banging, violence and aggression, screaming and yelling, loss of rational thought and temporary memory loss, beginning 24 hours after ingestion and gradually diminishing over two weeks. Luckily for us (and by chance) I seldom purchased products containing annatto prior to the challenge, I shudder to think where we would have ended up if she had been consuming annatto regularly all her life. – reader, Qld

[613] ‘Normal child’ with bruises, growing pains, headaches (February 2008)

Our older daughter was well within the scope of a 'normal' child before the elimination diet. The only reason she did it was because the whole family did it to support her sister. We would never have sorted out why she was always covered in bruises, got such growing pains and frequent headaches, why she was always restless and talked loud and why she was so skinny. All these disappeared on the diet. Thanks to our dietitian we found she is, among others, intolerant to gluten. – by email, Qld

[592] Grandparents notice temperament change after 28 years of marriage (November 2007)

My husband and I are doing the diet to support our grandsons. As a spin off, my headaches which I blamed on shift work and lack of sleep have disappeared except two times when we didn't have the boys and ate Chinese or Thai, both times I woke through the night with a raging headache. My husband who has been short tempered through our 28 years of marriage, has had a change in temperament/ behaviour, for the better. - by email, NSW

[565] One-liners (May 2007)

- We just had our Tu Beshvat holiday (New Year of the Trees), ate a good bit of dried fruit, and guess what? - more headaches, asthmatic spasms, gut in an uproar, and the boys nervier – by 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 off waking up at 2-3am every morning with an anxiety attack.

I was attending an 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

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

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

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

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

[522] 635: Poisoned by a Coles hot chicken (January 2006)

I have just been "poisoned" by a Coles Hot chicken. After eating it for lunch and dinner I got a terrible migraine with vomiting and nausea. The migraine was terrible and lasted for 5 days. I read the bag and found that it had at least 4 lots of flavour enhancers in it, including the stuffing, marinade and seasoning. Just another thing I can't eat out in case it came from Coles. Also

Devondale now has flavour enhancer in their soft spread. Of course I wouldn't buy it but who knows what you get when you buy a sandwich out. Where will it end? Everyone is trying to poison me.

I was very angry at the time (and still am) that some people can poison my food and not care that I'm extremely sick and lose 5 days out of my life having to cancel all arrangements etc. I wrote to Coles ...(and) Safeway...(and) Devondale... I will purposely avoid all their products. I also spoke to KFC and found there is nothing I can eat there except a dinner roll as everything has flavour enhancer in it. It is so difficult now going out to people homes or functions where you get served chicken and feel it's rude to ask where they bought it from but too scared to eat it. With the Devondale spread it's even worse; it could end up in cakes, scones, sandwiches from anywhere.

Now I have to ask "What brand of butter do you use in your cakes, sandwich etc" before I buy it or eat it. Life is getting harder with these additives. The food must be pretty tasteless if they have to use enhancers all the time. – Wendy.

[492] 635: Vomiting for up to 4 days (January 2006)

I have suffered terribly from this additive for a few years now becoming extremely ill whenever I eat anything that contains 635. I have to be so careful what I eat as I become extremely ill where I have to spend 5 to 7 days in bed, with very severe headaches, where even the strongest painkiller gives no relief. Then there is the vomiting for up to 4 days, where I cannot even keep a sip of water down. I would imagine food poisoning would be similar to what I go through. I often feel like I could die, or if not, I almost wish that I could, as I feel so ill and the pain in my head is so severe. It is not always possible to know what I am eating, as some things are not clearly marked, and restaurants do not tell you the truth either, as they are just not aware of how ill a person with this allergy can get.

So, I am fighting a losing battle where I can eat less and less these days, which is becoming very frustrating! I hope you can continue to publicise this problem to make these manufacturers aware of how much many people are suffering. What was wrong with foods before all these additives? Why can't we get back to the basics? I hope this clarifies it a bit more for you, and hope that someday, someone can do something to stop companies from "poisoning" half the population. Because believe me, when you suffer from this only once a month, it does ruin your life – Trudy by email.

[479] 635: Domino's pizza (January 2006)

What can we do about this?? We had Dominos pizza last night - a rarity for us. My husband had quite a reaction (itchy, headache, swelling in the mouth, muscle aches, sore chest, chest pains) and when I phoned to enquire about the ingredients they were very defensive and apprehensive about giving me a full list. I was finally advised after much frustration on my part that the olive tapenade has 635 in it (this is after he said it 'pretty much' only has olives in it). I had a mild reaction as well (itchy face, swollen mouth, itchy eyes, pain in chest).

Why don't they have to advise people that it has this nasty additive in it? A FULL ingredient listing should be provided or someone (some food authority) should make people aware that this can happen. It should be law, as I understand the consequences can be quite serious and even life threatening. My husband didn't get to sleep until well after 2am – even though the pizza was

consumed at around 7pm. The scary thing is that I have allowed my children to have some pizza but thankfully they both declined last night. I know the onus should be on the individual to be aware of what they are eating, and hey, we all know junk food isn't good for us, but every now and then it's nice to not have to cook dinner.

We've had a radical think about fast food as well as processed food and will now just make the effort to make dinner ourselves no matter what – even if we don't feel like cooking! - sincerely annoyed Rachael by email.

(later) I did forward a copy to FSANZ (for what good it will do). And I will forward a copy to Dominos as well. I've got extremely itchy hands today and my face is getting itchier and more sensitive as the day goes on - it's also a bit puffy and I'm sneezing lots.

[461] Son's migraines caused by same chemicals daughter's behaviour (November 2006)

My story started with an uncontrollable daughter who at 8 years of age was already getting suspended from school and was a horrible bully. The school wrote me a referral to a paediatrician. At the time I thought would only mean having her medicated to control her which I was dead set against.

I have two older boys that were very well behaved so I wanted to find the cause of the problem and not just cover it up with medication. Three days after Christmas 2002 my daughter went off to such a degree that all I could do was hold on to her while she bit, kicked and screamed until she was physically exhausted. That was when I knew there was something seriously wrong so I went to see a child psychologist who fortunately for me recommended your book Fed Up.

Within a month I went from thinking my daughter was destined for jail to thinking what a lovely young girl she is turning into. The results were noticeable that quickly. And from my daughter's point of view she felt better within herself. She was no longer on an emotional roller coaster every day. Because of how she felt on the diet it made it easy to keep her on it. She was feeling a whole lot more in control of herself.

Since cleaning out our cupboards I noticed that my eldest boy no longer suffered migraines and no longer took so long with gut aches on the toilet. So obviously he also was affected by these chemicals but in a different manner than my uncontrollable daughter ... – by email, NT

[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.

[442] Thoughts from a 12 year old failsafer (August 2006)

I have been on the diet for nearly 4 years. It has helped me a lot because when I was eight I was really naughty such as screaming all the time and hitting people and hitting my head on the wall. It felt so bad but now I am on the diet I feel so much better - I don't get headaches or pains in my side and feel sick in the stomach all the time. When I first found out about the diet and Learning Connections explained why I was acting and feeling the way I did I was so happy - happy that it wasn't me that was naughty or bad inside - it was the food I was eating. I can't eat takeaways now but I don't mind because my mum cooks nuggets and chips. I used to be sad that I couldn't eat my favourite fruit but I am used to it now. I haven't been able to eat lollies that other people can eat but mum cooks me lollies ... (mum does the smashi lollies ...no longer trading unfortunately) – from Qld

[439] "Migraines due to amines including fish oil" (August 2006)

My daughter has had migraines since she was about three years old. We had no idea what they were for several years. She usually gets a fever with her migraines and because of the fever the doctor would always put it down to 'a virus', prescribing painkillers. I would often give her panadol for four days straight just to keep the headaches at bay. She goes limp and listless, her eyes droop, she lies there and sleeps for hours until the panadol wears off and then the pain and fever return. Most times she will scream and cry at me grabbing her forehead, pleading with me to take the pain away. "Mummy Mummy my heads hurts, please stop it."

A year after she started getting the migraines, we were referred to a paediatrician who could find no medical reason for them. He thought it may have been an attention grabber or perhaps the start of a cold. He was at a loss too. He asked me to diarise her migraines. The migraines continued on and off with no regular pattern that I could work out. Once a week, then maybe another in 6 weeks times, then two months. It varied greatly.

Two years later we started taking a fish oil supplement (not the same brand as the one mentioned in [440], [441]). The migraines became more frequent and she started throwing up with them. She would go to sleep with a migraine, wake at 3 am and throw up in bed. This time her paediatrician ordered a CAT scan which was clear. He offered my 6 year old a daily dose of Betablockers or a trial using Riboflavins. He also suggested diet manipulation ... Guess which one we chose? ...

On the second day of the amine challenge, my daughter got a migraine, fever, droopy eyes and became listless. School rang and asked me to collect her, again. She stayed unwell for several days with the headache. Since the end of the amine challenge three months ago we haven't had one migraine! So, no more amines for my daughter. It turns out that the fish oil supplement has amines in it which is why her migraines would have become so frequent and regular. I was giving her six capsules per day for three months as per instructions. - mother of a seven year-old

[437] Amines and eczema (August 2006)

I am now 46, and have lived for most of those years with dreadful eczema all over my body, sometimes much worse than others. I went to many skin specialists, all who told me that diet was not linked, not to scratch, bathe in the sea when possible, not to use harsh soaps and apply cortisone creams. My eczema never got any better. I started the elimination diet a few years ago with my daughter, who suffers migraines, and not only did her headaches decrease, but my eczema also faded to almost nothing! Amines were the trigger for her migraines, and with keeping off amine rich foods in our house, I have not had any eczema problems since, and I no longer need to apply creams to any parts of my body. What a relief!

[430] 635: "hive/welt rash and ...swelling in the throat and breathing difficulties" (September 2002)

"I realise that Jake is very sensitive more than most, but he also had a very severe reaction to 635...He broke out in a hive/welt rash and also had swelling in the throat and breathing difficulties. The doctor gave him an injection which helped, but the redness was there for days along with headaches. And I also react...I also get welts the size of plates and severe headaches for days where I can't move." (Sydney)

[383] 160b: "banging his head against a brick wall" (January 2006)

My son used to bang his head when he was little. He's 12 now and we are doing the diet for his behaviour. After the annatto challenge he started banging his head against a brick wall for about half an hour. When he stopped he told us that he had a headache so bad that banging his head seemed to be the only way to make it feel better. - Australia

[376] One liners (July 2005)

We have been on the failsafe diet for nearly three and have had excellent results for the whole family - I have had no pre-menstrual migraines, my 18 month old's eczema all but disappeared and my three year old's behaviour has changed dramatically.

[287] Dental fillings and migraines (September 2003)

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

[264] Migraines from MSG (June 2003)

I am a chronic migraine sufferer. MSG is one of the big ones for me (triggers migraines and rash) and almost every major food company feels a need to use this in their products - Maggi is the main offender with others, eg Trident, not lagging too far behind. Why are these in our food if they are harmful? - John, by email

[204] 282: "282 one of main triggers for migraine" (September 2002)

I am very interested in your research re calcium propionate. I thought that it may be of interest to you that as a migraine sufferer, I have found that 282 is one of my main triggers for a migraine attack. I have them very infrequently but very severely. By keeping a food diary I have been virtually able to avoid them. Calcium propionate has been off my list for at least five years. Thanks for drawing the attention of the world to the effects of this preservative. - by email

[169] "I didn't think I could do without" (September 2002)

I'm starting to get on top of this diet but it has taken ages because I've only just got around to eliminating the things I didn't think I could do without - like a cup of tea with breakfast. Sometimes you just can't believe something that feels so good, so right, can be so bad - but I seem to react (with migraines) to both salicylates and amines. I also react to milk - not incredibly sensitive, but more than about half a cup and I'm gone - and it took me quite a long time to admit that. - email, NSW

[138] 282: Low energy, headaches from bread preservative 282 (December 2001)

Avoiding the bread preservatives (280s) seems to be helping me with new energy levels and lack of headaches. ... reader, NSW

[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

[018] Additives and food pollution (August 1999)

Sue, I finally got around to looking at your web page and decided to tell you my story although I imagine this sort of thing is all too familiar to you by now.

I am a middle aged male employed in a professional capacity. I have a family. For at least 25 years of my life I suffered migraine headaches. I saw doctors and specialists, I had CAT scans and no physical causes were found. In 1982 I was advised by a specialist to take large doses of aspirin together with ergotamine. I hated ergotamine. I had headaches at least every second day for many years. I took aspirin at rates of up to 2 dozen 300mg tabs a week. At one stage my doctor said I had "mild neutropenia". In the 1990s I took sumatriptin tablets (Imigran) which worked about as well as anything but were very expensive.

In 1995 ... I [found out about food intolerance]. I was ready to try anything and commenced the Elimination Diet. I had a continuous migraine for 6 days but stuck to it. I then started to improve dramatically. I have not taken an aspirin since. I take the occasional Panadol (maybe once a month on average) and this is almost always related to a dietary excursion (usually beer.)

Despite reading all the stuff about how I would improve and be able to reintroduce some foods I have stuck to the elimination diet. I have no wish to undertake challenges and no wish to start eating strongly flavoured but poisonous foods again ... I have learned to appreciate the food I eat and find a lot of enjoyment in subtle flavours.

Now the second part of this message. The more I read about food intolerance the more concerned I am getting. When I read your letter contained in Ministers.html my reaction is one of EXTREME ANGER. How can ANZFA possibly even consider softening of labelling regulations. I have been caught myself by ingredients lists that appear innocuous except for the word flavours or possibly oils with undisclosed antioxidants.

I have never written to a newspaper, never written to a politician and never even spoken to one on a serious matter except through work. However, I now feel very strongly that there must be changes made to stop food pollution.

How can a society where people will chain themselves to construction equipment to stop mining of toxic materials blithely tolerate the addition of things like BHA, BHT and TBHQ to the very food we eat. Sorry, there is no point preaching to the converted.

The point is I would like to HELP ... Of course I am very busy, but I am becoming very passionate about food intolerance issues as I read more and more. Please let me know what I can do.

[Many thanks to the writer of this letter and others like it. See 'FAILSAFE #11 (out soon) for suggestions about how you can help! ... Sue]

[012] Can a vegetable garden really be so bad? Read the two-part story from this family of five (May 1999)

Part 1

We are finding it difficult to start on the diet properly. Our vegetable garden at the moment is rewarding us for months of hard work by producing large amounts of tomatoes, sweet corn, strawberries and silver beet, it is very hard to pass all these up.

However, when we eliminated all additives - which wasn't many as we have always tried to avoid these anyway - our three-year-old started sleeping through the night every night for the first time - after only two days without two glasses of cordial each day. People said he is just growing up, but when he had commercial bread two days in a row for lunch (we usually bake our own) he woke up in the night on those two days only.

My own experience has been really great. I have suffered from migraines which last for two days every week for years. After five weeks of no additives and no foods high in amines I had not had a single migraine and felt wonderful. Then last week a friend gave us some home cured and dried beef, I couldn't resist. Guess what, a migraine the next day. I am going back on the diet straightaway.

Our 13 year old daughter suffers from asthma and headaches and was becoming what we thought must be normal at her age (withdrawn and sullen). Now she is hooked on the diet. No asthma, no headaches - she feels great and her general attitude to life in general has improved. My husband thought that sitting in front of a computer all day was giving him headaches every afternoon but has now made a connection between his headaches and chilli sauce on his sandwiches and the orange he was eating for lunch.

Our 11 year old son was actually the one we decided to do the diet for. He was extremely disruptive at school, could not concentrate or complete tasks and found it difficult to maintain friendships because he had a very volatile temper in the playground to the extent of injuring other children by throwing bricks, rocks and sticks. If he considered something was unfair he would destroy any cubby houses that the others had constructed. At other times he was a complete angel and couldn't do enough to help others. He is also the hardest one in the family to keep on the diet. He doesn't see his behaviour as his problem, it is always someone else's fault. He was going really well for a week or so then suddenly had an outburst one afternoon at school that his teacher, who is very understanding, could not account for. Later that night when he calmed down it came out that he had swapped sandwiches with a boy who had anchovies on his lunch.

Part 2 (two weeks later)

I've decided that I don't care how much our garden is producing after having two migraines following tomatoes for dinner one night and silver beet another. Both these left me feeling unwell and nauseous for 4 days.

This was also time for a breakthrough with our 11 year old son who also suffered from similar symptoms - as well as behavioural - for a few days after eating the silver beet. He is now aware that there is a connection with the food he eats.

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