Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

www.fedup.com.au

("160b", "annatto" keywords only)

[1596] 160b annatto: "I did not sleep for an entire night" (March 2021)

I first learned about 160b affecting me when I ate a Magnum icecream. I did not sleep for an entire night.

Occasionally I slip up and eat something with 160b in it and of course I suffer the same effects like my brain is speeding, lasting for hours.

I am sensitive to other additives as well including MSG which is hard to detect at times. I am 75 yrs old now and have suffered food intolerances for years and have had to live with sleep deprived nights regularly.

Why do they do it? White icecream tastes the same as yellow icecream! – Suzie

[1578] 160b: Remember annatto causes allergies as well as intolerances (August 2020)

My daughter (aged 13) currently has hives from eating Old El Paso Crispy Chicken meal kit which contains annatto colour - she ate last night. It is the only uncommon food she had eaten this week and 30 mins after consumption her face was red, swollen, hot and itchy. We had to double dose her with an antihistamine, and after consult with the doctor we have confirmed it is caused an allergy and the only ingredient we can ascertain which she would normally not consume is Annatto 160b. The hives lasted for 3 days on her face and was very itchy. We will certainly not be consuming this product again – Lisa

(The allergic issue including anaphylaxis has long been known. See factsheet with links to many more reports)

[1520] 160b annatto: Irritability and total sleeplessness (February 2019)

My son has ASD and I was lucky enough to stumble across the horrible effects it had on him over a year ago. His symptoms are irritability and total sleeplessness ... he stays awake all night after having some! I truly believe this is a harmful substance and should be banned. It's confusing because it's a 'natural colour'. I could see a lot of people not knowing that this additive could cause such a huge side effect! – Jenny

[1519] 160b annatto: "I was literally banging my head on the wall" (February 2019)

I always avoid foods that gave me migraines, such as bananas etc but then I started getting severe migraines and realised it was 160b in ice cream. It was because I decided to have a little every evening when a container was brought for the grandkids and they decided they did not feel like it. By

the end of the week I was literally banging my head on the wall. So I researched what I had been eating all week and found it had to be 160b. Now I try to avoid it, but whenever I get a migraine I look back at the package and always find that it was in it, when in the past it never was! – Kathy

[1507] 160b annatto: "yellow hell" (November 2018)

We've been following a largely failsafe diet for my kids for over 10 years and it's been a life-saver.

A well-meaning friend bought the kids the brown tub Bulla Classics Real Ice Cream Vanilla ice cream which has annatto B in it. An hour later my 13 year old had hives come up all over her face, as well as feeling generally rubbish (her words) and being very cranky (my observation). The kids call annatto "yellow hell" because they all react to it in some form, and it is showing up in more and more food – Hannah

[1474] 160b annatto: Allergic and food intolerance reactions (January 2018)

Have just had a double incident with Annatto 160b in Peters Connoisseur Vanilla ice cream. My 6 yr old grandaughter came up in two enormous allergic weals and I had what for me is a classic delayed reaction after 24 hrs. I am salicylate and benzoate intolerant with adverse reactions also to tartrazine and some other colours. I became physically and mentally exhausted with leg trembling which lasted for much of the day. It is a great concern that annatto is now being substituted for artificial colours. It may be of interest to you that we are a family with salicylate intolerance. My brother has Samter's triad - asthma, nasal polyposis and anaphylaxis to aspirin – Ann

[1471] 160b Annatto: Terrible headaches for days (January 2018)

I have been having terrible headaches within the past year. I am 55 years old and fortunately I rarely had headaches most of my life, especially ones that have lasted for days. I am a creature of habit and so I was able to zero in on the cause after only a few months. At first I started eating Cheezits on a daily basis because I like to bring a snack to work, this is when they started. After that I was eating Colby jack cheese. I knew that some ingredient was causing the headaches but I did not figure it out right away. After I avoided these two foods for a while the headaches stopped. They started up again after I started eating instant grits with the butter flavor, no issues with regular flavor. After comparing these three items they all contained Annatto. No headaches since - Margie USA

[1469] 160b annatto: true allergic reaction to many USA foods over many years (December 2017)

Off and on for several years I experienced pain in my ribs, right side and around to my back. This would be stopping me in my tracks sharp pain, and I couldn't sleep. Doctors on three separate occasions, a few years apart, concluded it was my gall bladder but expensive tests proved that to be untrue. Then my liver count made no sense, so liver problems? Kidneys? Not the pain problem. Then my pain became more constant and daily.

I went to another doctor in late 2015 who had never seen me before. This new doctor within moments diagnosed costochondriditis (*an inflammation of cartilage in the rib cage*) which could take months to get better. In 2016, a new doctor thought again tests for gall bladder or liver so I was sent to a gastroenterologist. More tests. Inconclusive.

All these years I had allergic reactions to many things including a known nut and seed allergy. Medications were changed that resulted in needing to be hospitalized twice. I constantly had rashes, hives and the awful sharp pain randomly coming and going. More specific tests for gall bladder, kidneys, liver, and rheumatoid arthritis, and other things. Negative reports.

Finally, in 2017, I had to do something different as my pain was more frequent and I had had hives or rash of some kind constantly for past six months. I had begun writing down everything I ate or drank. There didn't seem to be any rhythm or reason to the itching or the flares of increasing pain. I was fairly confident that these symptoms were not from my prescription medication.

Then one August weekend after feeling very happy with myself for eating clean healthy foods, I experienced the worst allergic reaction to date. I honestly thought I had the entire checklist for a woman experiencing a heart attack! It was hard to breath and move. I could reach my blood pressure monitor so before calling 911, I took my blood pressure and pulse. I was fine, then I began to itch and noticed hives. I took a Benadryl, I began to feel better. A Benadryl cannot stop a heart attack! Once I felt better I went over and over my food list for the weekend. Everything I had eaten before! What had changed? I was convinced that something in the food was cause.

I spent hours looking up ingredients in the foods I normally ate but concentrating on the past two days! I saw that something called ANNATTO was in or had recently been added to nearly everything on my weekend food list. It was a new NATURAL flavor or color! I realized the healthy nut free bread, organic tomato soup and organic cheddar grilled cheese sandwich, clear soda, natural ice cream, Starbucks salad and organic protein bar all contained ANNATTO!!!!

So I gave up my organic foods, started to only eat whole fruits and vegetables, fresh sour dough bread, whole eggs, real butter, and only things I made myself. No rib or side pain, no rash, no hives, no breathing problems, no back pain, no swollen ankles and hands NOTHING!

My doctor is thrilled with the changes and she and I are very curious for to have my blood tested, to see if they will reflect the inflammation that seems to have disappeared! Since August, I've occasionally had my old symptoms reappear after getting tricked to eat something that I used to be able to eat. Or something that was added in a salad or food that contains ANNATTO.

100% of the time it had ANNATTO hidden in the ingredients. 100% of the time my symptoms are pain, side, back rib, itch, burping, chest respiratory heaviness. If a lot of ANNATTO then my ankles, legs, hands swell as well. The reactions can last thirty minutes to hours and overnight! Benadryl does help.

It is extremely difficult to find what foods and products contain ANNATTO! Some companies have been very helpful, while others seem to feel proud that that are using a natural flavoring or color! - Gerri USA (*italics added*)

[1468] 160b annatto: “I hate this dye and what it did to my son” (December 2017)

Back story. When he was 3 he got cdiff (an infection of the gut caused by the bacteria *Clostridium difficile*, often after antibiotics). It cleared but he would still have bloody mucus stools and to a point literally just pass a bit of blood and mucus. No stool. He went into growth retention. Blood tests, cdiff

tests all came back in range. When he was 18 months he had Goldfish (*a type of biscuit containing annatto*) and broke out into hives. At school he had Cheez-its (*a cheese cracker containing annatto*). Broke out into hives. The only common ingredient was annatto. During the same period he developed alopecia. I talked with his gastro and he said take him off all annatto give it three weeks and see what happens. His hair grew back, he gained 10 lbs and has had normal stool since! He is 8 now. It's not all a coincidence. I know in my mama gut annatto is evil. This is his story – Angela from USA (*italics added*)

See also Alopecia factsheet

[1489] Annatto 160b: "adverse reaction to orange food coloring for more than 20 years" (June 2018)

I have had an adverse reaction to orange food coloring for more than 20 years. After having episodes of vomiting, diarrhea, cold sweats and fainting for one year, I narrowed it down to foods that were artificially colored orange. Avoiding artificial orange food coloring lessened the frequency of these episodes, but I continued to have them. A friend suggested that Annatto might be the culprit. I have closely monitored ingredient labels since, and have greatly reduced the number of these episodes. If a product lists "and natural flavors," I put it back on the shelf. A beta blocker was prescribed by my doctor to keep my heart rate in check, and the fainting has not occurred since - Jeanette (USA).

[1474] 160b annatto: Allergic and food intolerance reactions (January 2018)

Have just had a double incident with Annatto 160b in Peters Connoisseur Vanilla ice cream. My 6 yr old grandaughter came up in two enormous allergic weals and I had what for me is a classic delayed reaction after 24 hrs. I am salicylate and benzoate intolerant with adverse reactions also to tartrazine and some other colours. I became physically and mentally exhausted with leg trembling which lasted for much of the day. It is a great concern that annatto is now being substituted for artificial colours. It may be of interest to you that we are a family with salicylate intolerance. My brother has Samter's triad - asthma, nasal polyposis and anaphylaxis to aspirin – Ann

[1450] 160b: "his throat itched" (August 2017)

My 12 year (gluten sensitivity, nut and seasonal allergies) just had a reaction to the Annatto extract used in Earth Balance Soy Free Vegan butter. We've never used this product before but did some gluten free baking with it. Each time he ate the cookie we made, he had a respiratory reaction. He said he felt like his throat itched, he needs to cough and he keeps clearing his throat – Francesca USA

[1435] 160b: allergy to natural food colour annatto (April 2017)

I have experienced a food allergy for approximately two years and have only just discovered that the allergen is annatto. I experienced turning sunburn red, itching, stinging, burning from my scalp to my toes. The reaction was always the same, lasted one and one-half hours each occurrence, was painful, and occurred after eating varying foods: mustard, seasoned sausage, desserts, crackers, salads from my favorite deli. After eating a Sargento's cheddar cheese stick and having this painful reaction, I read the label of this cheese product and annatto was listed. I researched the additive and

have since avoided it and have not had another reaction. It is dose related for me. If I ingest a small portion of this additive, I do not react - Christi USA

(**Note** that annatto can even cause life-threatening anaphylactic reactions in some people http://www.fedup.com.au/factsheets/additive-and-natural-chemical-factsheets/160b-annatto)

[1434] 160b: "angry obsessive thoughts" (April 2017)

I am a 42 year old male that has bad reactions to annatto as well as other colors. I have suffered depression/anxiety, obsessive thoughts, tennis elbow, and have been very unhappy since my mid to late teens. Around 3 years ago I gave up Mountain Dew* just to be healthier. My body and mind responded by feeling better. After researching more I gave up other colors. My annatto find for me was waking one morning to angry obsessive thoughts "they came back". I dug through the trash can to find garlic bread with annatto color. By not eating or drinking foods with color I am happier and can find joy. I only wish I had known this 30 years ago - David USA

**Mountain Dew contains sugar (replaced by high fructose corn syrup HFCS in much of the United States), concentrated orange juice (salicylates), citric acid, natural flavors, preservative sodium benzoate 211, caffeine, sodium citrate, erythorbic acid, gum arabic, calcium disodium EDTA (label claims "to protect flavor" however its purpose more accurately stated is to prevent benzene formation by chelating the metal ions present in water that can act as catalysts in the reaction between sodium benzoate and erythorbic acid. producing the carcinogen benzene), brominated vegetable oil and artificial color Yellow 5 (tartrazine 102).*

[1406] 160b: Heart arrhythmia with fibrillation (August 2016)

I am a 65 year old lady who has had two ablations after five years of atrial fibrillation. My condition was distressing and the arrhythmia with the fibrillation was always intense and frightening. For nearly 12 months I have been free of episodes until recently after eating cashews treated with sulphites and last night after eating icecream with 160b. Last night I had an episode of intense arrhythmia and checked all the foods I had consumed…nothing was different except that I had eaten Icecream and after checking the ingredients I found it contained 160b. When I had my worst years of fibrillation I checked foods all the time for their allergies and 160b came up in an article when I was researching sulphites because the article said 160b could give the same allergic reaction as sulphites. I do believe that many many illness are caused by additives in food…I cannot drink wine either and have trouble locating organic without sulphites…Thank you for your article which has assisted me in confirming my own assessment of last night's episode. This type of information needs to be widely spread – Fleur

[1397] 160b: Another frightening reaction to 'natural food colour' annatto (June 2016) COURAGE AWARD

On December 4th 2015, my son (12, has Down Syndrome - but highly functioning), my daughter, and I were walking into our family doctor's office to pick up a prescription. We were holding hands as there is a very busy medical center there and drivers often do not pay attention to pedestrians. Anyway, we were walking across the parking lot when suddenly my son stopped, jerked his hands

away from us and began to scream "stranger!" But pointing at myself and my daughter. We tried to catch him but he kept pulling away, yelling help, and saying he didn't know us. I knew immediately by the look on his face that he was not playing a joke or kidding in any way. He truly looked afraid. I was terrified, my daughter was crying and yelling "momma, what's happening, what's wrong with him?"

I said we've got to get him inside- we yelled for the nurse and a couple of men who were there as patients, also assisted us in getting him inside. The staff knew immediately something was wrong and took us straight back to an exam room. The doctor came in and began a routine exam, drew blood, took urine, a blood pressure reading and temperature. Everything was within normal limits. He sent blood and urine off for stat testing and sent us to the hospital to a brain scan done (MRI), which was also normal. His urine came back positive for cysts and blood, but no bacteria. His liver test showed no signs of disease but appeared slightly enlarged on ultrasound. For 10 days we went through this hell of not knowing what to do or what could be wrong. Test after test. We were certain he had a stroke of some sort, or possibly a seizure. We could find no proof other than his disturbing behaviour. He could no longer walk on his own, he could no longer read or write. He had distorted vision that made him question everything he saw. He had fits of screaming as if in horrible pain. He was rocking constantly. He would stay awake 2 to 3 days at a time then sleep for only 4 hours. He couldn't hold a fork or spoon. He couldn't dress himself. He was terrified of water, and he was still having times he didn't recognize any of us. I stayed up late with my oldest daughter as she had moved in to help with her little brother until we could find out what was wrong. He had even had to go back to wearing diapers because he would pee and sadly even poop himself and not even realize what he had done.

The doctors said that they thought maybe puberty was coming for him and that some children with Downs were affected by this and regressed to 4 and 5 year old mentality. I just knew in my heart they were wrong. I believed that if it were what they said it would have happened gradually, not all at once. All I got were “I’m sorry” and offers of strong medications to "control" him. I couldn't do that and I didn't accept that. I cried Christmas Eve and prayed with my daughters for a miracle. I put my youngest daughter to bed and my oldest daughter and I started putting things together for Christmas morning. We were wrapping the kids’ gifts and talking about Christmases past when my daughter said, "remember how their kid would only eat chicken nuggets and Mac and cheese and it was sick all the time"? She was speaking of an ex family member, but I suddenly interrupted and said "YES! I remember! It was something about food dye that Kraft was using in their mac and cheese!"

It hit me all at once, that was it, I knew in my heart immediately but how could I find out for sure. Suddenly I was looking up every food my son had eaten in the last month that was not completely made by me or put together by God (not being sarcastic). I pulled out boxes, went through food labels and if we had no more of something he had eaten , I looked it up online. He had been on a kick of 3 mini chocolate donuts and a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a snack each afternoon and ate either Cheese Nips or MovieTime buttered microwave popcorn at night for a snack. He had been getting a "smoothie" made with Coffee Mate, ice, water, banana, vanilla, and sugar at breakfast with a poached egg and 2 sausage patties. His lunch was a Kraft single, and deli ham or turkey on whole wheat, with lettuce and tomato and frozen French fries that were oven baked. Supper meal was always a roasted meat and plain steamed vegetables, cottage cheese and sometimes a home-made bread or roll. After reading ALL the labels almost EVERY FOOD ITEM HE WAS EATING contained Annatto. The French fries, the crackers, the ice cream, the coffee mate, the popcorn, the cheese slice,

EVERY meal except our evening meal contained Annatto. I knew I had been given the answer I needed. I started searching annatto online and kept getting RECIPES to prepare with it!!! I needed someone who knew it was bad for you too, someone who knew some people could not metabolize this stuff! I finally came across your site and read what you had to say. I had the verification I needed and now was gonna figure out how to flush that out of his body.

I immediately began using food grade diatomaceous earth on him by mixing it in unflavored yogurt. I gave him 15 drops of ConcenTrace Trace minerals in fresh squeezed orange juice that morning. I started giving him purified water and squeezing lemon in it or making him purified water with fruit infusion in it. Black tea with raw sugar or wild honey and the day after Christmas I got on Amazon and ordered bee pollen, green propolis, and more ConcenTrace minerals, plus concentrate vitamin paks.

I threw out every single annatto item I could find and flushed his system with all the good stuff I could get in him. It took about 7 days to hear him laugh again and within ten days he could walk straight. Three weeks before he could get his sense of comedic timing back and tell jokes like his old self and about a month before his vision cleared. I thank God so much for answering that prayer. That is truly all I could ever want. To know my son is gonna be ok. We had a setback lately however which is how I found your site again as I has forgotten to bookmark it. Anyway, he's been getting that look in his eyes again, like he's not sure who he's talking to. He's also has a couple of toilet accidents and not wanting to come out of his room because he's seeing shadows after him? Anyway, yesterday I found that his "all natural" real fruit juice gummy multivitamins contain none other than ANNATTO! These were recommended by our pharmacist. My (our) doctor, has listed Annatto on my sons chart as an allergen under "food and medications" now. He said he had it listed under food only, as he had no idea it was used in medications. The pharmacist said she had NEVER heard of it so she had no way of knowing it was used in vitamins (it was listed under ingredients on the bottle) anyway she wouldn’t refund the $35.00 for a product he should never have had. She swears her "autistic" son has taken them for years. I suggested that she take him off them and any other things with annatto in them, just to be sure he has autism at all. She told me there are always going to be "websites and parents out there looking for an excuse for their child's illness" and that sometimes we just have to accept what we are given. I just looked at her and said how happy I was for such "websites and parents" or I would have never had verification that I was on the right track with my son.

My son has not yet learned to read fully again and still can't write. But, I believe in time he will be completely himself. I am just shocked at how much a simple waxy seeded plant took from him and how hard we've had to fight to get him back from its clutches. I have seen some horrible things as a nurse, but I have to say I think the damage from Annatto his more harmful than any drug addiction I've ever seen and certainly needs much more attention from parents and the medical community. I don't know how it is in AU and European countries or in the Asian countries. I am sure that in the United States that this "natural," food additive is in far too many food items. Almost everything from cookies to casseroles contain this "poison" and the U.S. seems to have no plans to cut back on it. It is dangerous. Period. Sadly, too many people here are afraid they will have to cut out a food that their family just loves or their kids can't get by without its taste or convenience, so they would rather give them a pill to counteract it. Another sad reality is some parents find they can get a social security disability check for their children who have learning disabilities of things like attention deficit

disorder, and they are not gonna give up that check for a cure (this is not ALL parents, but I have met MANY who call it their "fun money" for "having to take care" of such a child).

Thank you for letting me tell our story. I pray that its better every day and I will be far more diligent in my label checking, so I can be sure Annatto is out of our lives FOR GOOD ! I hope someone out there who even suspects that they or their child could be affected by a food additive that they try an elimination diet just to be sure. Just because everyone isn't bothered by it doesn't mean you or a loved one isn't. Doctors don't always have an answer. Trust me, our doctor is a great doctor and a good friend and he never even GUESSED something like this was affecting my son. I've had 5 children and been a nurse for 30 years and neither did I. If I hadn't had my memory jostled into remembering Kraft taking the dye out of their mac and cheese and all the complaints about it, I would never have thought to look it up. I would have never found your site and my son likely would be in a very bad situation right now and we would still be hopping from doctor to doctor in search of an answer. You will never know,....never know, how much stress we were under. How much fear I had that my son had some horrible disease creeping up on him and stealing away his life. That any moment he could possibly just stop eating, or breathing. I didn't know and no doctor could tell me otherwise. Now even though I haven't read of anyone's case as extreme as my son. What if they don't know. I think of children who have died from unknown causes and young people in institutions because their families couldn't care for them anymore because one day they started with an unknown illness they never could overcome. That could have been my son. He just turned 13. If I hadn't found out, how long could I have continued to change diapers and spoon feed him? Would he keep growing bigger? Would he have gotten worse? He was already getting worse by the day. Would it have leveled off or continued? These thoughts are there now but not because I fear a return but because I fear there are others out there who are in the same position we were.

I pray not, but if there is someone out there, just try and see if it is something they have always liked or something that they started not long before. Flavored pudding, Ensure, yogurts, or any plain old everyday foods that everyone else eats. And remember, just because you've never had an allergy to a food or a reaction to an additive before does not mean you aren't now. Allergies can develop at ANY time.

I'm just thankful that a website like yours is out there to help point someone in the right direction. I appreciate it very much and hope you keep up the good work in letting people know what is out there and what can be done about it - Lynn from USA

(**Sue's comment:** Thanks to Lynn for sharing this amazing story. A few warnings: If you think you are affected by annatto 160b, you do not need to take any special products to detox. Simply stop consuming annatto - and expect some withdrawal symptoms within two weeks. For behavioural reactions, normally these present as a day or two of increased symptoms e.g. on days 4 and 5. Withdrawal symptoms can include agitation or tearfulness, followed by increasing improvements. Most people who realise they react to one food additive are likely to be affected by some other food additives - and possibly some "healthy" natural foods - as well).

[1388] 160b: True allergy to annatto yellow food colouring (March 2016)

My daughter was allergic to all nuts and peanuts from an early age and later developed an allergy to annatto. It was easy to determine. She had been skin tested and was negative to dairy products. She would often eat a cheddar cheese but started reacting to it around the age of 9. There were only two ingredients and I knew she was not dairy sensitive. The other ingredient was annatto (160b). She later reacted to Goldfish, Cheeze-its and a breakfast cereal containing annatto. Because it was a newer allergy, at first we forgot to check things she had been able to eat in the past. Each ingestion has shown a progression of symptoms. Her mouth and throat itch, difficulty breathing and last time she felt swelling as well. We have been able to resolve the symptoms with benadryl and albuterol.

The nut allergy is much easier to manage. USFDA laws require the allergen to be listed in bold and other people know what a nut is. But now my daughter and I must continually read all the fine print of everything - even products that were once fine have often started adding annatto. We must explain to other people what annatto is for her safety at schools, camps, sleepovers. It would be much more difficult with a young child or one with disabilities. This is an unnecessary hazard because it is appearing now in so many foods, even those labelled "organic". I would love to see all dyes, both "natural" like annatto and the synthetic dyes removed from our foods - Nicki, USA

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

Here is selected edited feedback from the petition for Unilever Australia to remove the natural colour Annatto 160b from Streets food products, with 5,511 supporters to date.

Following some reports from health professionals, the feedback below is organised by symptom:

- Allergy type reactions
- Violence, anger and self-harm
- IBS Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Hives, eczema and skin conditions

- Depression and anxiety
- Insomnia and night terrors
- Migraines and headaches
- Head banging

Clearly this additive has not been adequately assessed by those entrusted by the government to protect us and our children.

Feedback from professionals:

As a dietitian with decades of experience in helping clients with food chemical sensitivity, I have certainly come across numerous people who react to annatto during food chemical challenges. These people are then advised to avoid any products containing annatto. IT would be great to see more companies remove this troublesome additive - Melanie (dietitian)

So many of my clients test up with a reaction to annatto 160b and once eliminated from diet their lives change for the better - Trish (dietitian)

I have a child affected by Annatto 160b and as a dietitian I see many other people affected by this food colour - Jodie (dietitian)

I am a neuropsychologist who is determined that science should be used to inform – Clare

Allergy type reactions:

I am one of many adults adversely affected by 160b. In fact, I have come close to dying on three occasions due to 160b – Marian

160b effects children's behaviour and not for the better. How do I know this? Because I have witnessed and a number of occasions now my well behaved daughter turn into a hyper active, defiant and aggressive child within 2 minutes of consuming products within 160b in it - Patricia

I've spent many nights in the hospital emergency with my daughter suffering severe breathing difficulty after consuming 160b. I have repeatedly asked to have some sort of medical certificate stating that she has an allergy to the additive 160b only to be told that the tree growing the nut that the colour is derived from does not grow in Australia so they were unable to provide it. I have been met with "crazy lady" looks at every which turn. My son also exhibits behavioural problems after consumption. What are we really exposing our children to in unnatural proportions? All for unnatural aesthetics – Sandra

1 Daughter anaphylactic 2 all artificial colours including 160b & other daughter gets asthma & it's in a lot of ice creams & I'd like the girls to b able 2 have more choice & not miss out – Katrina

My child is allergic to 160b and this means we have ONE choice of which product we can buy – Cara

We have allergies to annatto - Brooke

Violence, anger and self-harm:

160b affects my son. He says it is like a switch flicks in his head and he can't stop – Julie

I have 2 daughters that become violent and angry after consuming 160b – Rebecca

I have a daughter who reacts badly to annatto 160b. Anger, sleeplessness, slapping her own head repeatedly when angry and not coping: all due to this additive, which is in so, so many food products. Please listen companies, and use alternatives! - Mel

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

My child reacts with aggression every time he consumes annatto – Susie

I'm signing this petition as my 3 children react aggressively when they ingest Annatto (160b) - Alison

I see my children turn into monsters when they eat 160b – Kristina

My children react to 160b, it makes them angry. We don't buy *any* products which contain it – Daryl

My kids go crazy for up to five days after eating things containing 160b. We've avoided it for years now as the consequences were just awful and profoundly affected – Elizabeth

Discovering the cause of our daughter's opposition and aggression when she was around four was life changing for us. Who would think that a a "natural" ingredient could cause so much angst. To this day I can guarantee if she has 160b I will get a call from her teachers the next day. Please remove it - we only buy peters icecream without 160b. Would love to be able to buy your products but not worth the reaction. – Maryjo

My son acts so insane when he accidentally gets annatto that I have to keep him home and send everyone else out of the house for three hours. He races around like a maniac, climbs people, laughs hysterically, talks rapidly, is completely defiant. I read labels very carefully. My daughter and I have both put products back on the store shelf as if it might bite us if we see annatto in the ingredient list and I was considering buying it.

That's because it might just cause her brother to bite her. He's broken her skin open after ingesting annatto, once in vanilla ice cream, and once in white cheddar crackers.

Our daughter is like Jekyll and Hyde after eating anything with Annatto in it! She crawls on the ground instead of walking, babbles incessantly, has epic meltdowns (kicking and screaming). – Michelle

My son Riley's ODD completely disappeared over a 2 week period after removing this chemical from his diet. – Robin

My son too reacts to Annatto 160b. Within 5 minutes of eating food with this additive, he becomes hyperactive, aggressive & violent. Please remove this additive from your ice cream! – Nicki

IBS Irritable Bowel Symptoms:

I am in my 40's and it took a long time to discover that Annatto 160b is one of the triggers of ibs, sinus and arthritis. It is unnecessary and should be banned – Hilary

A family member is intolerant to 160b. Diagnosed with IBS, Gastro-oesophageal reflux, oesophageal ulceration with associated anaemia from bleeding at 5 yrs and recommended steroids for life. All fixed by removing 160b. This family hasn't had a Streets ice cream in over a decade and a half – Eve

160b is one of the main causes of my colitis, clinically proven at RPA hospital! It is terrible stuff – Kate

My son gets terrible stomach aches from 160b - Sarah

Hives, eczema and skin conditions:

I am in my sixties and I react to Annato160b with dreadful hives. Please remove this colouring and therefore increase the range of foods I can eat – Ann

Both my daughters have severe reactions to 160b. Both behaviorally and with nasty eczema-like rashes. I want them to be able to eat ice cream without pain! – Zoe

Through the elimination diet we discovered that two of my daughter's severe eczema was caused by 160B. I've decided, after seeing what it does to those two children, that no one in the family should consume it - Stephanie

My son reacts badly to annatto. Raised white spots all over his ears patches over his face. Gets extremely confused can't concentrate on anything and feels very ill – Danielle

Depression and anxiety:

My emotions go 'all over the ship' when I eat anything with 160b in it. I avoid it like the plague – Julie

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

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

Insomnia and night terrors:

160b has a terrible effect on me causing insomnia and migraines. I can't buy products with this chemical in it. Please take it out for my sake (and the kids affected too) – Peter

We have been avoiding annatto for years as it keeps my husband and 3 children awake and feeling wired for hours if they have it at dinner time – Jessica

Annatto causes my son to head bang and have night terrors. We do not by streets products currently due to the fact that this colour is used. Please think our your consumers, many whom are children – Lauren

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

This interrupts my 6 year old daughters sleep for several nights in a row. We will not buy streets ice-cream because of this – Amanda

I want to be able to feed my 4 children and myself icecream which isn't going to keep us awake all night – Madeline

160B causes me to have post nasal drip as well as insomnia – Carol

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

160b kept my daughter from sleeping well until she was almost 5. With it not in her diet she now sleeps well. – Joanna

Migraines and headaches:

I am signing because 160b gives me migraine. Please remove it from all products – Judith

I have adult children that have reacted to 160b all of their life, nasty additive that adds nothing to the icecream except a headache, bad behaviour and rashes! We have only ever purchased icecream without this additive – Janelye

160b is an unnecessary food additive. Natural does not always mean good, as in this case with massive headache and irritation a common effect – Kathleen

An ice-cream headache I can deal with. Annatto gives me chronic pounding migraines... – John

My 10 year old son gets pounding headaches from this additive: it now seems to be in nearly every 'natural no artificial colours or ingredients' food. There are better alternatives (beta carotene, turmeric) – Iris

This additive is harmful to adults as well as children, if I accidentally eat a single serve of food (ice-cream, yoghurt, pastry) which contains it I get a violent migraine which lasts for several hours. I would urge you to cease using it in all of your product lines – Ben

Head banging:

My son was also negatively affected by 160b. He had a permanent bruise on his forehead and sleep issues until it was completely removed from his diet - Lisa

My son reacts to this additive with headbanging – Heather

This turns my 3 year old into a head banging crazy mess! Horrible stuff :(- Annette

My 2 daughter had a permanent bruise on her forehead for about 6 months when she started solids from banging her head on walls, her cot, the porcelain tiles, on the floor and head butting me. I was so worried she was doing permanent damage and I asked about it on a mothers' forum. Someone suggested 160b was the cause and it was in the cheese singles that she ate everyday. I stopped the 160b and it turned off like a tap. The headbanging only began again when she ate something containing 160b. It is banned in my house now! – Anita

My son reacts to 160b. As a small child he would bang his head on the doormat or concrete floor to get rid of the headache. When we stopped the yoghurt with 160b, the behaviour stopped - Claire

Thank God we connected annatto 160b with our (then) 4yr olds head bashing and aggression, shudder to think where we'd be if we hadn't removed this entirely from his diet – Carmel

My son banged his head against the bed for over a year and a half before I eliminated it from his diet, once eliminated he stopped within 2 days. BAN ANNATTO! – Katie

Other comments:

I'm signing because my daughters deserve to eat safe food. 160b causes seizures in my otherwise healthy 11 yr old. Listen to the families who live it, its not safe! – Lisa

Your company is just NOT LISTENING to the many, many people who have TOLD you they react to the "natural" colour 160b

My three grandsons have proved to me time and time again that this one additive causes major behavioural problems in them. They also know this and even the 6 year old will ask if a product has 160b in it now, because they do not like how they feel when they have consumed it. Small amount or not ... it IS a major problem!! Please acknowledge that. – Jenny

I always check labels before I buy, and if a product has annatto it's disappointing, because it goes straight back on the shelf – Caroline

I don't buy anything with annatto in it. Even a teensy tiny bit! – Ingrid

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

More information and scientific references on annatto 160b

[1377] 160b: compulsive hair pulling or trichotillomania (January 2016)

I have been aware for a few years that my daughter's behaviour is severely affected by annatto (160b). She becomes loud, aggressive and irrational (cries and tantrums at the drop of a hat and cannot be reasoned with).

The past few months she has been becoming very anxious and has been developing a habit of pulling her hair out, and running it through her teeth, numerous times a day. It has been increasing fast, and I could see she was unable to control it.

I was starting to stress about it and think about the impact this may have on her life, long term. Then I had a lightbulb moment- annatto- it had slipped back I into her diet.

I immediately talked to her about this, cut it from her diet and within a couple of days it had drastically reduced. It has now been a week. Still reducing. She is much more relaxed and just generally calmer in herself - Carla

See more about compulsive hair pulling

[1365] Asthma related to preservatives (sulphites, benzoates, nitrates) and colours including natural colour annatto 160b (November 2015)

Our son's breathing problems and wheezing started at four months, when a GP put him on antibiotics. He was on the nebuliser at least twice a day with corticosteroids, ipratropium and salbutamol and oral steroids thrown in when he got really bad. He had all the tests for causes - dust mites etc - which proved negative. Then he started solids at 5 months and got worse.

When he was two and a half we started on the elimination diet. His asthma disappeared in the second week.

Challenges showed that Joe reacted to sulphites, benzoates, nitrates and colours, both artificial and natural. One musk stick (artificial colours azorubine and erythrosine 127) started him coughing within three minutes. Annatto natural colour 160b took a little longer. Artificial yellow colour tartrazine 102 turned out to be the worst of all. Through experience, we learned that Joe gets asthma from colours in antibiotics and toothpaste. Additives can also be absorbed through the skin, so he also gets asthma from coloured shampoo and liquid soap. - from Fed Up with Asthma

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

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

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

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

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

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

[1360] 160b: Who would expect annatto in apricot nectar? (November 2015)

I, like many others, avoid annatto like the plague. I drank some in Berri Apricot nectar a couple of years ago. The next couple of days were an emotional roller coaster with me crying hysterically and irrationally, not being able to order my thoughts, not being able to cope with my then young son and generally being so depressed and emotional.

My daughter also has inadvertently eaten annatto in a Coles brand scone. She turned psycho - trying to scratch my eyes out and screaming at me. My friend said: Man! What did you feed her??! And that's when I explained about the annatto. Thanks to your efforts to remove this nasty chemical from the many foods where it appears - Karen

[1354] 160b and salicylates, now “an intelligent boy with great leadership skills” (September 2015)

I'd like to share my wonderful news. My son is 7 years old and is in Year 1 at school. This afternoon I had his first Parent/Teacher Interview EVER where it wasn't taken up with discussions about his behaviour. Instead I got to hear how he is an intelligent boy with great leadership skills. Since following this group and tweaking his diet for certain salicylates that I didn't know about and 160b, finally his teachers are seeing the little boy that I've always known was in there. We've been to Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, etc...and it's all come down to his diet. Thank you to everyone in this group for your questions and feedback. Am one very proud Mum – Tracy

[1333] 160b: Six year follow up on Annatto 160b story - possible serious mental health issues in a 16 yo (May 2015)

As a toddler, my son had spectacular, but introverted tantrums, where he threw himself at the floor and howled like a dingo. The best solution was to drop a heavy blanket on him, and leave him to it, until he went to sleep. If I intervened with a cuddle, reassurance or any form of stimulation, the tantrum escalated.

At pre-school he took himself to bed crying after every single birthday party, and went 'crazy' when we took him camping. He was often hyper sensitive to clothing labels, music (especially classics in minor keys) and visual distractions. His peers labelled him a cry-baby, and his pre-school wanted to keep him back from school. Later, his primary school teachers suggested he had ADHD, was somewhere on the Autism spectrum, and a 'difficult, anxious' child. We went for testing which showed generally moderately delayed development, so we did occupational and literacy therapy.

I assumed the birthday party issue was linked to food, and cut out all artificial colours and preservatives. This led to a big improvement. The breakthrough came because he ate toasted Kraft cheese sandwiches (it melted really well), a couple of hours before Wednesday swimming lessons (where he went to pieces), but not on Saturdays (with the same teacher). I worked out the only difference between those lessons was the cheese beforehand. When I cut out the cheese he was more cooperative and had a longer attention span.

I searched the internet to find out if there was such a thing as an "allergy" which changed a person's behaviour, and found your website. I recall reading about Annatto, head banging, yellow foods and inconsolable toddlers, and thinking "Some of that sounds familiar". That shred of knowledge led to a diet review, and the discovery that frankfurts, pizzas, Kraft cheese, madeira cake and 'fruit juice' contained Annatto, which might explain his post-party meltdowns. Our camping treat was powdered custard, and our lunch time staple was processed cheese, which could explain the camping craziness. 'Special' afternoon teas were fish fingers on toast and toasted cheese sandwiches. Annatto in everything!

I think he was about 4th grade when we succeeded in cutting out Annatto. His behaviour steadily improved. When we slipped up and he was accidentally exposed, the teachers could tell, and so could he. He still had a mild 'language processing disorder', but was now able to contribute effectively in class, and make friends. He felt the difference, and was keen to avoid annatto by checking all his food.

He came home from school camps and said 'there was nothing to eat' except fruit, bread and vegetables. That was true because the breakfast cereal, juice, cheese, ice-cream, custard, crumbed meats, some chips, and some afternoon tea cakes, all contained Annatto. No wonder his first camp was a disaster! Now, we all had some level of control over Annatto.

SIX YEAR UPDATE

At this time I wrote to you regarding my son, and his reaction to Annatto. I often wondered if we really were on the right track, and if I made a biased assessment of his sensitivity. Thought you would be interested to hear an update, as he is now 16.

Two years ago he had a 'blind' reaction to Annatto. He was interstate at a Scout Jamboree, and recorded as Annatto sensitive for his dietary requirements. Due to very hot weather the Scouts were provided with all sorts of foods and fluids to encourage fluid intake. My son was provided with commercial package fruit and jelly cups, unlabelled but touted as "natural" which he assumed was OK. After a couple of days, his friends were so concerned at his tears, agitation and aggression, that a group of them fronted the leaders and took him to First Aid. There, his records were reviewed, and the person seeing him saw his Annatto sensitivity. He diet was reviewed by a nutritionist who was on site, and who found the unlabelled jelly cups contained Annatto. He had time out, and compassionate attention from his camp mates, but was still out of sorts a few days later when he came home. Nonetheless, it was nIce to have an independent event and diagnosis.

He is a different person without Annatto, now getting academic prizes, citizenship and service awards, and a school Gold medal. Before, various teachers had written him off as difficult, ADHD, and even autism spectrum. There is hope for desperate parents!

Thank you for helping us through Fed Up! Without your site information, and guidance on elimination, I am certain he would have been diagnosed with serious mental health issues by now.

I do wonder what is happening in the mental health, prison, and medical institutions. During a recent visit to the Children's Hospital he was offered custard with Annatto and cheese with Annatto. How many troubled teens, or even geriatrics, are undiagnosed Annatto reactors, who are then institutionalised, and fed a diet containing Annatto? How much is Annatto sensitivity costing Medicare and our legal system?

Thanks for your web site, it makes convincing unbelievers so much simpler! As I say to my son, there are no excuses for bad behaviour, but it certainly helps if there is an explanation. - Anne, by email

See further ADHD factsheet and ADHD story collection

[1325] 160b: Annatto and frightening headbutting (March 2015)

My 7yo son headbangs and headbutts with annatto. Actually he generally becomes a right little monster with it. I avoid it like the plague. I sometimes will allow other additives in small amounts if I absolutely have to, but I will not allow annatto under any circumstances after the last episode with it.

When did he first start head banging? He never was a child that had particularly bad behaviour. I only took all the additives to see what would happen, and now that he is additive free, I get exceptionally bad behavioural spikes with additives. Some additives he can tolerate small amounts of, and some there is now pretty much a zero tolerance level, eg sodium benzoate in medicines. He didn't really head bang as an ongoing thing, but on occasion in the middle of a tantrum or when he was particularly frustrated he would do it at the age of about 2 or 3. He also appears to be gifted, I am thinking of having him assessed. It had stopped until I saw the annatto effects in January.

Which products (e.g. yoghurt, ice cream) have you noticed are a problem? I have only seen a reaction that I am absolutely sure was due to annatto involving headbanging once, and that product was Magnum Minis. As soon as I attended your talk last year, I stopped my kids having additives, especially colours, immediately. I did give him ice cream once that had annatto, and we had some issues at school on the Monday, but he had also had artificial colours, preservatives and flavour enhancers that weekend (we were away and I thought it would be ok for the weekend, discovered I was wrong!) so I can't be sure that he did react to the annatto then. There was no head banging after that weekend, but he did punch someone. That appears to be a reaction in him to flavour enhancers and preservatives as a general rule though.

How did you first realise that annatto was causing the problem? He has been additive free since July 2010, and this reaction happened in January 2011. He had had no other additives other than the annatto. He has not had annatto since, and the behaviour has not repeated.

Why do you say that "I will not allow annatto under any circumstances after the last episode"? My aunt gave both my kids a Magnum Mini after lunch, just the plain chocolate and ice cream one, which I had not given them since starting additive free. My son was ratty and annoying that afternoon, but I put that down to being tired, as we had had an early start flying from Sydney to Adelaide. That night she allowed them another one after dinner. The next day, I was at the supermarket, and my son and daughter had a disagreement about something, and he just lost it and headbutted her, followed by headbutting the shelves and the floor of the supermarket, and proceeded to follow me around the shop screaming at me, and headbutting several shelves along the way. No amount of talking or threatening of punishment had any effect. I told him that I was leaving and walked out of the shop, and about 5 minutes later he came screaming out looking for me because he realised he had no idea where he was, and he headbutted my leg. I physically restrained him in his car seat and waited 10 minutes for him to stop thrashing and screaming. He was generally painful for the next 24 hours. He had not behaved like that since he was 2. I knew there was annatto in the magnums, but I thought a small amount would be OK, which clearly it wasn't. I bought chocolate coated ice creams which didn't contain the annatto, and there were no further issues. He has not had annatto since, and we have not seen any behaviour like this again. He really hurt his sister, she had a bruise for a week. He had never ever headbutted another child in his life before then, and his sister is half his size. I'm not willing to risk that again, so I check everything that could possibly contain annatto before he has it, yoghurt, cheese, ice cream, margarine etc.

Any further observations? Flavour enhancers make him aggressive. Preservatives appear to remove his impulse control. Artificial colours make him hyperactive and aggressive. But none of them make him behave the way he did after the annatto. After that episode, I would rather give him any other additive than annatto. I can usually overcome issues that the other additives cause, but not the annatto.

I only did the diet to see what would happen. He wasn't a particularly badly behaved child, he was challenging, but he could be gifted, so challenge is part of that. Now that I have stopped the additives, I can see the sorts of problems that other people have, because he appears to be rather sensitive to them now. He is a more calm and reasonable child, and is certainly better behaved than most kids I know. His behaviour didn't stand out compared to the other kids before, but it certainly does now, he is much better than other children, and I can see the effects of the additives in other kids now that I didn't see before.

Another interesting thing I noticed when I stopped the additives is that he lost over 2kg in weight in about 6 months. He was a small, skinny child to start with (he was 19kg when I started the diet, dropped to 16.7kg, and now is 19.4kg), and the weight just fell off him. It took him a further 6 months to catch it back up, and he eats like a horse, and has done since I stopped the additives.

Thank you for everything you do, you are amazing - Alice (report received December 2011)

[1324] 160b: Annatto made him "punch himself repeatedly in the head with a closed fist and also bang his head against the wall" (March 2015)

My son was about two and a half at the time, when I noticed his extreme reaction to eating 160b. We used to use margarine and eat Streets vanilla icecream (I thought by choosing vanilla flavoured products I was avoiding the colours and potential nasties). When he ate these products he would punch himself repeatedly in the head with a closed fist and also bang his head against the wall. Obviously as a parent, this behaviour caused me great concern, only to be reassured by people that it is just a phase and he will grow out of it. This was the start of my journey exploring food additives and the effects they have on behaviour and children. After buying a book and reading up I decided to cut out products with annatto, and made the switch to Peter's Vanilla Icecream and back to real butter. Within a very short time this headbanging behaviour ceased. No parent should have to watch their child physically hurt themselves as a result of what they eat!

As you say, if you notice one reaction to food there will be more. Every time we used to go to Pancake Parlour and have the two stack pancakes with icecream he would have stomach cramps and diarrhoea that day. We have visited doctors on several occasions regarding stomach cramps and recurrent diarrhoea. They wanted him to have blood tests but I was reluctant as he was still young.

Other difficult behaviours have remained with our son. He falls in the upper range of normal behaviour, borderline ADHD, shows some autism symptoms and we are off to a Child Psychologist tomorrow for his anger which is escalating into rage. After buying your books and DVD at the talk and chatting with you I feel empowered to start the RPAH diet. I've had one appointment with a recommended dietitian and on Monday our family will start on the RPAH diet. If he can stop making the silly whoop whoop noises and been argumentative, restless and confrontational then this will be well and truly worth it (and I'm a little excited to see just how I react to certain foods! My husband not so much!)

Thank you so much for the time and energy that you and Howard put in to educating the general public about food additives. You are making a huge difference to so many families! - Sarah (report received December 2011)

[1322] 160b: "on the failsafe diet now for 2.5 weeks...MAJOR change" (March 2015)

I have had my 5 year old, diagnosed with ADHD a couple of months ago, on the failsafe diet now for 2.5 weeks and have found that his tantrums that had been occurring between 12.30 and 13.30 at school (not all days but a lot) which had involved kicking the teacher and often spitting and having to be carried to the office have stopped. I believe that 160b in Vaalia yoghurt every day, two or three serves, has largely been the issue. He is now sitting and reading his reader in one go which for us is a

MAJOR change. We have eliminated all additives, colours, and only have low salicylate and no amines or nitrates, We still have dairy and wheat. We were having. He gets hot red ears at times which are sensitive to touch - I have read that this is a sign of food intolerance? - Rhonda (report received September 2011)

(Comment from Sue: Red ears: Yes, they are a sign of food intolerance and like any other symptom, can be associated with any of the usual culprits although I have to say in my experience, dairy foods would definitely be a suspect.

Many families are extremely reluctant to give up dairy foods, and would rather do almost anything else. The golden rule of food intolerance is: whatever you most like is most likely to affect you. I often recommend to families who are unable to give up dairy foods that they switch to A2 milk first, as a stepping stone (this means A2 milk, A2 yoghurt, Nuttelex margarine and dairy free ice cream, e.g. So Good Vanilla soy bliss). For some people this is enough. Most (if behaviour is involved) need to go further and find it easier to switch to oatmilk, soymilk or ricemilk from A2 than A1. Note that A2 yoghurt is not failsafe - too many amines - but you can get rid of the amines by turning it into Quark overnight (see Quark in our recipe list)).

[1314] 160b: "pins and needles in his head and they wouldn't go away" (March 2015)

We already knew that our son was hyper-sensitive to food colourings, especially 160b. We first discovered this when his sister was born when our son was 2 - he was head-banging til he cut and bruised his forehead. His behaviour was always "full on", he was impulsive, always demanding attention, his speech was delayed, but he was a fabulous sleeper. Numerous people suggested we have him assessed for autism or Aspergers. We had speech and hearing assessments. We cut out 160b for a while, and then inadvertently when he was about 3 my husband bought the wrong custard. I gave it to him anyway thinking that the food colouring link was a bit tenuous. Within 30mins he was headbanging something he hadn't done for nearly a year. The remainder of the custard went in the bin! I was really strict at not buying anything with 160b - but not really with anything else.

Last year when he was 6 and in kindergarten, his behaviour became appalling again, to the point that his teacher told me that I needed to get some help from a child psychologist to help me be a "better parent". You can only imagine how distressing this was as I was already at my wits end with a difficult child. I went home and immediately went through the pantry and discovered that foods and brands that were previously free of 160b now had it in it. One product was the apricot bites you buy in the health food section. My kids saw me with them and asked if they could have them, so I decided to tempt fate and see what happened. Within 15mins Charlie was sitting in a chair gyrating arms and legs flapping and head going up and down. Then he started hitting his forehead. I asked him what was wrong, and now, unlike when he was 2, he could now explain the sensation. He said he had pins and needles in his head and they wouldn't go away. Banging his head helped temporarily. The next day he was frightful.

Once we eliminated 160b again, his behaviour improved considerably, but despite seeming to be a very intelligent little boy, he wasn't and still isn't doing well at school. His teacher has expressed concern that he has gone backwards this year, that he can't sit still in class, he finds it very difficult to concentrate and stay focused, he is easily distracted, and he hums all the time. At home he makes silly noises, is always stirring up his sister, gets upset very quickly, is incredibly impatient and cries and screams when he doesn't get his way.

I love my kids, but I'm exhausted by them. I already know he is sensitive and now after reading "Fed Up", know that I have to eliminate a lot more than I have. Interestingly, I feel so many of my health issues are related to additives as well. The most bothersome being severe IBS since I had my appendix out 18 months ago. I was given Flagyl while in hospital and then had 6 weeks of severe diarrhoea. As a one-on-one music teacher, I can't continue to work with the amount of gas my body seems to produce. I tend to laugh about it, but it is a real issue. Like so many others, my GP and the gastroenterologist I saw have said to me "Good news, nothing is wrong!" It makes me want to scream! So, I am desperate to find someone who might help me do the elimination diet with my kids (my daughter, while pretty well behaved had awful eczema as a baby, doesn't sleep well, is often irritable after school and had constant chest infections and thus antibiotics when she was 2-3 yrs old). Their grandmother suffers horrible migraines that are definitely food induced. I know that they are both bright intelligent and adorable kids underneath the irritable and often badly behaved exteriors. I'm petrified that I'm going to do long term damage to them psychologically because I end up so strained and exhausted that I yell a lot. I hate myself for saying this, but I often feel that I wish I didn't have kids as it's so much harder being a parent than I thought it would be. In fact, I don't enjoy it at all - Helen (story reported in May 2011)

Update 4 years later: About a year after I wrote I found out I had a gut parasite (Dientamoeba fragilis). Our son had the parasite too, so we had various course of antibiotics and anti-parasitics and within weeks he was a different child. I didn't tell the school what we were doing as I wanted to test whether there really was change - when he came home with a Principals award for "trying hard to be a more responsible learner" I burst into tears. Even so, he remained, and remains, sensitive to annatto, and indeed many other colours, additives, preservatives etc.

Jump forward to roughly now, and I am still struggling with my gut and my daughter in particular has been quite difficult. Three weeks ago I re-read "Fed Up" and decided to try removing all additives. I was strict for a week - and it was bliss. The kids were so different - calm, no fighting, arguing, whining, sleeping better, more focused etc. And I then decided to use up some topping (Cottees chocolate and caramel topping - preservative 202). The next morning they were horrible - so everything with anything on the bad list, was thrown in the bin. The kids are back to their beautiful selves - and I must say, for the first time in ages, I've actually enjoyed being a parent.

They're both very intelligent kids, but the massive block to them achieving their potential has been food.

I'm in my third year of a Bachelor of Science (Nutrition) with the hope of becoming a dietitian. Much of what is written is obviously the motivation/inspiration – Helen

[1315] 160b: "she no longer hits herself on the head or scratches her face when she has a major meltdown" (March 2015)

I have used one of your recommendations with my 20 month old. I took annatto out of her diet and I don't know if it's a coincidence but I definitely saw an improvement in her tantrums and she no longer hits herself on the head or scratches her face when she has a major meltdown. She is much more manageable when she has a tantrum and she doesn't get as upset or angry and not for as long as she used to a couple of months ago.

The items she was eating almost every single day for nearly 2 months were : Lay's Quavers cheese flavoured potato chips Pepperidge Farm baked cheddar cheese goldfish -only a little handful or so as a treat or in the car/shopping trolley, but still even a little amount adds up! The tantrums and head hitting also started around the same time I started giving her those treats - 19 months. Now she is just a couple of days off 21 months and she still has screaming tantrums, but nowhere near as severe and not with headhitting, scratching her face or full on flailing limbs. Also the amount of tantrums had definitely decreased. Thanks again and keep up the good work! :) - Vicki from UAE (report received September 2011)

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

The following stories were found lurking in an old mailbox and in various facebook posts:

- My 9 year was affected by 160b. He was not a head banger but his tantrums did make me worry that he would harm himself as he would kick and throw himself around. A diet change for my son was a wonderful blessing he is a great kid now still has his moments but they are manageable - Therese
- Sends my two completely bonkers. The sad thing is it's considered a natural Colour so is in many products listed as 'no artificial colours' etc - Kylie
- Found my 6yr girl had a big reaction to aldi vanilla custard last night (160b and 407). One minute reasonable child next minute behavior off the scale - Trisha
- One of the worst reactions I have ever had was to ice cream with 160b in it. You won't have any trouble finding it, it is EVERYWHERE!!!! - Carlia
- She was only 10months when she started reacting I couldn't believe such a small baby could be so violent. ..- Jennifer
- Another itchy, partly sleepless last night, but rare because I avoid annatto - Ray
- Hubby brought home some white chocolate ice-creams (he tries to do the right thing!) for us last night and all that crossed my mind was "it's okay, I'm not sensitive to amines and I'm good with dairy". After eating two (I know) I checked the ingredients. 160(b). So today I'm dealing with my irrational anger and massive impatience with my kids. The best way I can describe it physically is I feel it building in my head behind my eyes, it's like I haven't slept in days and am really tired - Keira
- 160b sends my 3 yr old climbing walls. It is one of the most dramatic reactions he has...nasty stuff - Jo
- All I know is that my 5 year old cannot tolerate this at all, bed wetting, aggression, risky behaviour like running out in front of cars and just all round horrible naught behaviour of course a huge amount of food had this reaction but I have found 160b one of the worst for him (microwave popcorn oh good Lordy it's revolting the reaction) - Debbie

- It is the worst additive for my daughter, she has adhd and this one makes her have massive, and i mean massive meltdowns! - Donna
- My son also banged his head he was one - Mel
- Jittery movements, anxiety, foggy head, eczema - Lynda
- My eldest would get weepy and have terrible stomach cramps, would writhe around in agony screaming in pain. I didn't realise for ages that 160b in his vanilla yoghurt was the culprit. As soon as I stopped giving it to him he became a different boy - Kate
- My 11 month old would bounce her head repeatedly off the titles she was aggressive punching walls etc snacking kids twice her size at daycare. At only 11 months old I was so scared that she had some really issue but cut the 160b and she is an angel – Jennifer

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

From the day he was born, my son screamed. At the age of 2, his behaviour was unmanageable. This was when we started the failsafe journey. Some of his behaviours were; trouble sleeping, belly aches, head banging and running out the door and across the road. The final two on this list were really bad. He would bang his head on the concrete outside, on the tiles and often (strangely) on the coir doormat. By chance, a friend went to a talk by Sue Dengate, and in this she mentioned 160b (annatto). We found this in yoghurt. When we took this out of his diet, he stopped head banging. The other major problem we had was that he would run away, and seemed to have no understanding of danger. He would often suddenly dash across the road, even on busy streets. We tracked it down to amines. When we became really strict on the amines, his behaviour settled down greatly. Since that time, we have found out that he has mild autism and coeliac disease, and that these things affect behaviour too. Amines are slowly and carefully being trialled again, but annatto will never come back - Claire

[1231] Aspergers thread from facebook group (October 2013)

My autistic boys have several food sensitivities. Fruit, dried fruit, salami/cured meat, 160B is a HUGE one. I avoid MSG(natural ones too). I limit the amount of bread and milk they have- Tess

[1229] 160b: Massive meltdowns (facebook thread, October 2013)

- I don't know about the health complications all I know is that my 5 year old cannot tolerate 160b annatto at all: bed wetting, aggression, risky behaviour like running out in front of cars and just all round horrible naught behaviour of course a huge amount of food had this reaction but I have found 160b one of the worst for him (microwave popcorn oh good Lordy it's revolting the reaction) - Deborah
- It’s the worst additive for my daughter, she has ADHD and this one makes her have massive, and I mean massive meltdowns! - Donna

- My son would bang his head repeatedly on anything hard or prickly eg, the doormat, tiles, concrete etc. he would do this for hours. I suppose he had a headache, but at age 2 he couldn't tell me - Claire
- My son also banged his head he was one - Mel
- Jittery movements, anxiety, foggy head, eczema - Lynda
- My eldest would get weepy and have terrible stomach cramps, would writhe around in agony screaming in pain. I didn't realise for ages that 160b in his vanilla yoghurt was the culprit. As soon as I stopped giving it to him he became a different boy - Kate
- My 11 month old would bounce her head repeatedly off the tiles, she was aggressive punching walls etc smacking kids twice her size at daycare. At only 11 months old I was so scared that she had some really bad issue but cut the 160b and she is an angel - Jennifer

[1184] Diet "instead of living in a war-torn home" (February 2013)

I have found Fed Up to be amazing, a real eye opener. My daughter is 28 months old, and I now know that my daughter has Oppositional defiance. What a relief as I thought I was going to go insane with her. We have made a few changes with avoiding anything with 160b and 282 in bread and the difference already has been amazing. Now I want to undertake the elimination diet under supervision as I also have an 11 month old son who I know will also benefit. The book has really opened my eyes and has inspired my partner and I to push forward to get the best from our kids instead of living in a war-torn home. The work you are all doing is amazing so please keep up the good work. You have given me belief that life will get better and that the kids will have a better quality of life, because from small changes we can already see it happening so I can only imagine once we have completed the elimination diet the benefits we will receive. Thank you sooo much. - Gloria

[1160] 160b: Annatto is in everything! (December 2012)

Our 4yo son's behaviour really (apparently) deteriorated while I was pregnant with our second. It is hard to know if it's because you get lazy with the food whilst pregnant and go with more convenience products or a myriad of any other things. But I certainly recall during my pregnancy knowing that this couldn't go on! His day time behaviour didn't seem terrible, just the terrible two's, right? He would play quietly by himself for long periods of time and only if you asked him to stop doing the thing that he was enjoying, the reaction was over the top response. His tantrums were unbelievable. It would start with a simple over reaction to something and he just would be quite literally hysterical. No amount of comfort or words would ease the tantrum. The only way to deal with him was to usher him to his bed where he would scream it out. He would then sheepishly come out and we could move on.

The saddest, scariest day for me, he came out of the kitchen carrying 5 toys (as kids are known to do) he dropped one, and then all of them, he just lost the plot! Screaming, out of control, and the look on his face told me his head was in agony. I knew that if he was a teenager feeling what he was feeling, there is no doubt in my mind that he would suicide. What other way out is there? He didn't

sleep well, not more than 2 hours at a time, and it would generally take 3 hours to get him to sleep. Draining.

We were introduced to food being the root of our problem, thanks to my mum. First thing we pulled out of the cupboard was Heinz Baby Fruit Bars. Checking every ingredient and it is the last ingredient that is the problem: Annatto (160b)! According to The Chemical Maze "May cause irritability; head banging; hives; headache; sleep disturbance; restlessness" Our boy, of 2 and 1/2 was suffering from all but the head banging, and hives, although I would argue that he had hives on the brain, as I would describe it.

Annatto is in everything! So even though I was giving him a variety of foods, he was still getting a good dose of annatto every day. the fruit bars, vanilla ice cream, fruit drink concentrate, crumbed deli products, cereals, noodles, caramel rice cakes, almost every aisle in the supermarket contains annatto in it. And this poor little fellow was like a junky. He would go scratching at the pantry door trying to get at the products that contained his fix. I marvelled at how he knew that was what would fix his pains. But I was the same with dark chocolate, I didn't know it caused the headaches, I just knew that it made them go away. Immediately all things with annatto were removed from the cupboard and given away, with much guilt I might add. Within 3 days it was plainly obvious that he was feeling great. We had a few incidents early on, learning what products really do contain 160b. It's hard for people to understand unless they see it firsthand too. I was really lucky that Mum had stayed for the whole week and saw the turn around. And, although it wasn't a hard sell for her, she already understood the link between food and the body; it is always great to see positive results.

From there you could start to see more ups and downs, that other things were causing troubles. And every time I researched, it brought me back to www.fedup.com.au and salicylates. It took a little while to figure out that was what we needed. I read Sue Dengate's book, Fed Up with children's behaviour. The entire book was light bulby for me, my child hood would have been so much better had this information been available to my mother. All I kept thinking while reading the book; was that this is the book that should be read by mothers when they come home with their newborns. You are told to look for reactions, but you really don't understand what that means. We are also told there is no manual for babies, but I really feel that the Fed Up book is a great start.

It was pretty much a no brainer to go failsafe, but the approach was tricky, as change always is... But after a slow two week start, which I had declared we would use up what we had in the house but only buy failsafe things. Didn't work out too well, I couldn't in good conscience actually cook with any of that stuff. Before you know it we were boxing the food up to give away.

It took me a few months to find my feet, many nights crying myself to sleep, and many days worried sick. It was only after moving to rural Queensland that I was able to meet with an Allied Health dietician that familiar with the RPAH Elimination Diet and could be helpful. But this was 12 months after we had started, and I really had found my feet. We got there in the end, the transition was painful. We now live on the strict elimination diet now. Only low chemical for us. Any challenge we make ends in negative results. So there is no deviation from the path for us. My previously fussy eater is now expanding on his food palette. I would never have thought it possible. But it seems that

a lot of kids with food intolerance are fussy eaters. Somehow their brain has the food/feeling connection but it just doesn't tell us.

As it turns out, my mother doesn't fair well with Annatto in products either, it gives her terrible dreams and for her, it is just best avoided. Of course, I would advocate for its removal from our food. Is it really necessary, it is just a colour, a colour with other safer alternatives? – Jayne from Qld.

[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

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

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

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

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

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

We have seen head banging on two occasions, well after we started the diet. My sister gave him some yoghurt by mistake with Annatto 160b in it and he was a very loud very angry little boy. He

didn't really have tantrums as such but did quite a bit of banging his head, wouldn't let us near him. He didn't want to be touched at all and kept threatening his little brother with all kinds of nasty things. A lot of yelling. He did not sleep at all well that night needless to say. It was the same the second time. – Susan, by email (Please report similar annatto 160b reactions to suedengate@ozemail.com.au)

[1075] Annatto 160b: headbanging, rage, trichotillomania (hair, eyelash, eyebrow pulling) (December 2011)

When my daughter was 12 months old she had a head banging reaction to annatto in yoghurt. The next week she had another episode of screaming, tantrums and banging her head repeatedly on the metal frame of her bed. The very next day my mum saw a story on ACA or similar program with yourself mentioned, and thought the 4 year old kids on the segment sounded like what we had with our 12 month old ... so we looked up your website. I looked back at food she ate and I had given her a kids Heinz apricot bar and sure enough it had annatto too. This was all I needed to prompt me to look at what she, and we, were actually eating!

My daughter is now 6 1/2 and we still have the occasional uncontrollable outburst and know she's had something. We actually had an incident last weekend with her and the wicked 160b. She was at a friend's place Saturday night and they thought they were doing the right thing when they gave her jelly snakes 'preservative free, no artificial colours'. I didn't know about the snakes but Sunday saw her at her worst. She woke in a rage and was lashing out, hitting, biting, screaming, indecisive about trivial little things and completely and utterly beside herself. When in this state (the worst lasts for about 4-6 hours) she cannot control any aspect of her being. She even goes as far as plucking all her

eyelashes and eyebrows out with her fingers (trichotillomania) if left alone. I went to the friend's house and began quizzing them! A peek at the ingredients on the snakes proved me right yet again when I saw the number 160b. (fyi they were Aldi brand).

After an annatto reaction is somewhat over, she 'sleeps it off' and will often then sleep up to 15 hours (say 6pm til 9am!!). She had a horrific day and finally fell asleep at 11pm Sunday night. She slept it off and woke close to 10.30am Monday morning. She was fine Monday and Tuesday ... But Wednesday evening saw her showing (relatively mild this time) annatto signs again. I asked her about school (started back on Tuesday) and she was hesitant to tell me her little friend had bought a lemonade 'spider'. I went to the canteen today and sure enough... Annatto in the ice cream!!!!

I'd also be willing to bet my husband reacts to annatto... he gets very moody at times and also his sleep patterns are all over the place. Some nights he will be up all night on the computer and just not tired, then other days/nights he too will sleep for 15+ hours. - Skye, NSW

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

'We've been on the GFCF diet since October – it has helped a bit but over the last 2 weeks he has been really terrible again – angry and throwing his train set around the room', said the mother of a 4 yo autistic. We worked out that Soylife vanilla yoghurt was introduced 2 weeks ago. This yoghurt (but not Soygurt brand) contain annatto 160b. (A US study earlier this year showed that the GFCF

diet alone does not work for autism and this is just one example why, you have to avoid a lot more than just gluten and casein).

'My daughter reacted to annatto in fish fingers with head banging, rocking and making whoop whoop silly noises - this lasted for about three days, every time she tried to concentrate, the headbanging, rocking and noises would start up again' said the mother of a 6 year old

'When my son was 18 months old he did headbutting for 6 months – he would do it on any surface, walls, floor, glass – and it was obvious he was really hurting himself. A friend told me to cut out ice cream - yes, it was Streets Blue Ribbon ice cream with annatto in it - and the head banging stopped,' said one mother whose son still has behaviour problems. No one reacts to only one additive. If you have ever seen a food reaction, even once, it means there are many others you haven't noticed.

'Your seminar was great. I have had my 5 year old ADHD son on the diet now for 2.5 weeks. His tantrums that had been occurring nearly every day at school - kicking the teacher and often spitting and having to be carried to the office - have stopped, and I believe that 160b in yoghurt has largely been the issue. He is now sitting and reading his reader in one go which for us is a MAJOR change. We have eliminated all additives, colours, and only have low salicylate and no amines or nitrates, we still have dairy and wheat. We had positive results by the end of week one with continuing improvement so plan to stick with the diet. We are attending the group you recommended.'

[1067] 160b: Annatto tantrums due to soy yoghurt (July 2011)

We are currently doing the elimination diet and are about to reintroduce foods. My son is 2 and has been a handful being constantly irritable, huge tantrums that are inconsolable lasting 30 mins or more 4-5 times a day, speech delay, no concentration, runny poos. He has been an angel since starting the elimination diet however took a backwards step at about 2.5 weeks. We discovered we had been giving him soy yoghurt with 160b in it. We took him off it and his symptoms cleared again. It was mostly behavioural issues such as tantrums. His poos weren't noticeably worse. – by email

[1017] 160b: Annatto 160b in yoghurt - an open letter to Parmalat (May 2011)

Why do manufacturers have to put 160b in their yoghurts? I am really disgusted and disappointed that they can't see what this harmful colour does to children and adults alike. Before I knew of its harmful side effects I would gladly give my 2 year old a tub of yoghurt thinking I was doing the right thing, little did I know at the time that I was giving my child a dose of crazy and irrational behaviour that bordered on vicious and just plain heartbreaking to watch. Now that I know that this colour is detrimental to my child's well-being - I will never ever purchase something with it in. Why is it not banned in Australia? For a supposed first world country with brains and intelligence - we have made some really bad decisions when it comes to food additives and artificial colours - we are poisoning our children - yoghurt can definitely shoulder some of this blame. Make the right choice, take this colour out of yoghurt! – Tiffany, by email

[1016] 160b:"It wasn't me mum, it was Annatto" (May 2011)

A few weeks I thought my son decided to kick start the terrible two's early and begin to show me his quite advanced tantrum throwing. Out of nowhere he would start banging his head! on the floor, wall, me or whatever was in close range. And as most mothers would do I would either kneel down to him and talk with him, place my hand under his little forehead to stop him from hitting the hard tiles, carry him away, distract him, ignored him, you name it, but it continued and got worse! Then started the slapping and hair pulling, he would constantly slap the sides of his head with either one or both palms of his hand and or pull his hair to the point he would cry. His face would frown as he would moan and continue to slap himself.

It wasn't just the physical actions either, he was again constantly irritable. Now for those mums who have intolerant children, irritable behavior can vary when affected. With my son, it's a continuous grizzle along with constant disruptive behavior. Again, I know this sounds quite normal for toddlers to behave in this way occasionally, but it was daily and for most part of the day. And it only got more constant as time went on. I would look at him and think "this can't be just a behavioral issue I have on my hands" my baby was clearly distressed and as I sat in a familiar field of not knowing what to do and at times on the verge of tears I would begin to question myself, what am I doing wrong? What kind of mother am I if I can't settle my baby....again! Maybe I just have an unsettled, quick tempered emotional child on my hands! I then reassured myself that this wasn't the first time I had been here, the lonely field of what to do and where to go, this place was no longer unfamiliar, I knew there was an answer I just have to find it and as time went on I did and it wasn't him, it was Annatto!

Having already established that my son was dairy and food chemical intolerant, I began to sit back and re access his diet. He was still following the recommended RPA Strict Elimination Diet in exception of one or two extra side dishes and began to suspect extra dish 1, the 'Soy Life' vanilla soy yoghurt. It was literally the same day when I found a great Australian website where there was story after story of the effect that natural coloring 160b had on children, and what was the most common reaction you ask?.....head banging, and where was the coloring? In the soy yoghurt!

I immediately stopped feeding him the yoghurt and just short of a week I began seeing dramatic improvements. My son didn't show any reactions to the yoghurt the first time he tried it, and it did take quite some time before his change in behavior took place, however as he began teething and his desire for soft cold solids increased over time, it was the constant high intake of the yoghurt that did in fact cause the adverse reaction. - from Happy Tummies blog http://hubpages.com/hub/t-wasnt-me-mum-it-was-Annatto

[992] We cannot believe that all our problems are gone simply by changing food (March 2011)

I am trying to find the words that will express exactly how thankful I am for the work you do and for the information you make available to parents everywhere.

You really have changed our lives and the life of my 4yr old son whom we were afraid was showing signs of being ODD and even Aspergers. He also was exhibiting symptoms that suggested irritable bowel and gluten intolerance. Since making the switch to fresh food made from scratch we cannot

believe the complete change in our son. I had hoped to see positive results but had no idea that ALL of our problems with his behavioural and emotional development would be solved simply by eliminating all processed foods. I have cried so many times these past few weeks which to my family and friends would seem normal as I am often reduced to tears over my son s behaviour. However, I now cry true tears of joy... the change in him is that dramatic!

We suspect that 282, BHA 320, 160b and the major artificial food colourings as well as MSG were the main culprits. However, we decided that the risks with these chemicals are too great and that rather than read the labels and get tricked time and again it is far easier to just cook from scratch the old fashioned way. Being in the kitchen all day is a very small price to pay for a happy family environment!

I have attached a couple of images that summarise how things have turned out for us... a picture tells a thousand words!!! – Carley, by email.

<before, and after>

Update May 2011: Prior to implementing the diet in our home my 4yr old had never picked up a pencil other than to angrily scribble swiftly on a page before abandoning the task. This image was taken at preschool only one week after being on the diet. I cried. I couldn't believe it, not only was he writing and persisting and trying hard to perfect his attempt at the first letter of his name... he was proud. Proud of himself for achieving something. That meant so much to me, having not really seen that look, that emotion in him ever before." - Carley by email

[989] Annatto 160b: eczema, tantrums and head banging (March 2011)

My son William had eczema behind his knees when he was 6 months old and then it went away. In October this year it reappeared (just before his 2nd birthday) with a vengeance! It was behind his knees and then spread to his legs, patches on his arms and his entire chest was rough. Fortunately we got onto it quickly and he didn't suffer with any broken skin, however the key things I took out were vegemite and grapes. He had only had vegemite for a few weeks but it took ages to get the eczema to go again. After spending a weekend with my mum, William had eczema behind his knees again. The only thing she gave him which I never do was Vaalia yoghurt (160b) so I took that out and double checked EVERYTHING he was eating for 160b and bingo! No eczema since, with the added bonus of far fewer tantrums. When I realised he had yoghurt with annatto at my mum’s house (and had a little eczema again) I threw out everything that had annatto in it (Heinz kids muesli bars which I was giving him occasionally). The other reason, apart from eczema that had me throw out annatto was his tantrums. William was headbanging again, which he hadn't done in a while. That day I took out annatto and that was the last time I saw him headbang, and that was in November!

He still gets frustrated and chucks a wobbly every now and again, but there's been a big big change since removing annatto. If a normal tantrum for William is a 3/10, they were 8/10 before I eliminated annatto. – Margaret, by email

[988] Annatto 160b: Head banging due to food causes nose bleeds and deformation of the skull (March 2011)

From introduction of solids when my baby daughter was 4 months old, she banged her head more or less continually, to the point of making her nose bleed constantly and causing deformation of the skull. She was always covered in big bruises and it was so bad we could never go out, I couldn't even leave her alone to go to the toilet. After 18 months of this, we discovered your website 3 weeks ago (when she was nearly 2) and found she was eating heaps of annatto 160b in yoghurt and Kraft cheese as well as some other suspect foods. Although she improved, removing annatto alone was not enough. After a drastic change of diet (we switched to unhomogenised milk only), the head banging stopped completely and we are now slowly reintroducing foods. We cannot thank you enough. No one else mentioned diet. – parents at Launceston talk, Tas

[987] Annatto 160b: Annatto and years of constant diarrhoea (March 2011)

It took me a LONG time to pinpoint Annatto as the cause of my problems. For years I just lived with constant diarrhea. It was at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010 I started to develop new problems. I started getting severe abdominal pain (like nothing I had before) and then a few months later I started getting extremely bloated. The bloating caused me to have unusual belching fits which just added to the embarrassment of my situation. In Feb 2010, my wife and I took a week long cruise... most of the food on the cruise didn't bother me; for the most part I was symptom-free that week!

When we returned from our trip all my problems returned (much like your story). Then in March a new symptom ... I started to get some very unusual and severe pain in my nether regions to the point that it was uncomfortable to sit down. I went to go see my PCP about the burping, abdominal pain, and my "new" problem.

He diagnosed me as having celiac sprue disease and hemorrhoids. A few weeks went by; the problems continued even with a new diet. The pain in my bottom came and went. Then finally in March, I ended up finding out one of my problems was not hemorrhoids but a perianal cyst that I had to have lanced.

After speaking with the proctologist following my surgery and telling him about all my recent problems he decided to perform a colonscopy to rule out colitis and Crohns. Colonscopy was clean but the only thing they could tell me was that they thought I had IBS.

Finally, in August I went to go see an Allergist. The allergist performed a scratch test and put me on a BRAT (bananas, rice, applesauce, toast!) diet. I spent the next three months slowly adding unprocessed food back into my diet. When it was time to add dairy I began having problems again. It was only after speaking with my older sister that she told me she had problems with food dyes. Her problems were skin related (rashes / eczema). She explained to me that yellow cheese has a dye in it (little did I know at the time).

So, I decided to "re-challenge" dairy but this time with just milk--no problems! I then added yellow cheese to my diet--problems again! Finally, tested white cheese--no problems! It was a eureka moment! :)

I still make a few mistakes from time to time but I have been mostly symptom free since making that discovery. I now have no doubt that ALL my problems (including my cyst) were due to my intake of annatto in all the foods I ate. – by email, USA (we would like to hear from others who are affected by annatto with these symptoms or others: suedengate@ozemail.com.au)

[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

[984] Annatto 160b: Severe delayed vomiting and diarrhea after annatto (March 2011)

I'm a 40 year old physician who has a severe reaction to consuming annatto. If I eat any significant amount, I have the onset of severe vomiting and diarrhea roughly 12 hours later, which then persists for 12-24 hours. I don't have any classic "type I hypersensitivity" symptoms such as hives, just a severe delayed gastrointestinal symptoms. I've managed to effectively avoid annatto since the age of 4 or 5, except for rare exposures every 3-10 years since the age of 4 or 5. I've only recently learned about annatto and concluded that it is the additive that explains my intolerance to certain foods.

Here's my brief story. At a very early age, about age 5, I refused to eat cheese since I insisted it made me sick. My mother tells a story that she didn't believe this, had me eat some, and recalls "sure enough, he threw up!" However, I could drink milk and other dairy products without problem. As a teen, I figured out (the hard way) that white cheese like mozzarella didn't cause a problem, but yellow cheese did. So I continued to avoid yellow cheese, knowing that it made me ill. Everyone around me thought my aversion was odd, and I suspect many people thought it was my imagination. I would accidentally eat something with yellow cheese added every 5-10 years, get severe symptoms, and this would reinforce my belief that I really did have a "physical" intolerance.

I learned of annatto a year ago, and finally my reaction made sense. This connection was reinforced when I got sick a couple of weeks ago, and I assumed it was the flu since I had not eaten cheese. My wife looked in our refrigerator, and sure enough we had some orange yogurt with annatto added. I had eaten two the night before.

I'll also mention that at baseline, with no annatto exposure, I tend to have symptoms consistent with mild irritable bowel syndrome. I've never bothered to ask for a diagnosis, and am used to living with it. So, my pattern hasn't been chronic IBS symptoms with chronic annatto exposure, but severe reactions when I get exposed very rarely. – Physician, USA

[983] Annatto 160b: yellow addiction, nightmare behaviour (March 2011)

After reading on your website the letter from Helen in NSW titled 'Yellow Addiction' I felt compelled to write to you.

I realised the adverse effect 160b had on my family approx 3 years ago when my now 6 year old son was about 3. Even at the age of three he was very good at sitting and concentrating at a task, be it drawing, lego or watching tv – except that was if he had consumed 160b within 24 hours. He became a completely different child. He couldn't sit still, he couldn't concentrate on anything and authority meant nothing to him – he was literally a nightmare. With hindsight prior to taking 160b out of my son's diet, yellow was absolutely positively his favourite colour. I can't remember him being attracted to only yellow foods – he has always been a fairly good eater but definitely yellow "things". He always had to have the yellow cup and the yellow plate and if he didn't there would be hell to pay. If you asked him back then what his favourite colour was it was most definitely yellow. His favourite colour today is unknown – it seems to be different every day. Until I read Helen's letter I hadn't made the link but who knows maybe it was linked to his 160b intolerance.

Today, obviously I keep 160b out of the house but I can tell straight away if my son has consumed it whilst at a play date! If I personally consume 160b I generally have a terrible night's sleep and/or are very restless during the day. As you've mentioned on your website, 160b does seem to be creeping further into our food supply lately and it is driving me crazy. Aldi in particular seems to be extremely guilty of this. Sue, what can I do to try and get this revolting colouring out. (Contact manufacturers and see our Now Targeting section - S). Obviously we don't eat a lot of processed food but just being able to let the kids select an icecream treat every now and again has turned into a nightmare. – Donna, by email

[972] 160b: Annatto and IBS in a 3 yo (October 2010)

I first noticed the annatto/IBS connection (bad smelling gas, diarrhea, loose stools) with my 3 year old son specifically with processed cheese singles, so I try to keep him away from those and generally don't have a problem, or if so, it is only small. Recently, we were away for almost a week, and when we came back, he started taking these "gummy vites" children's vitamins ("all natural" and sure enough colored with all natural annatto) he hadn't had for some time, and it was like a switch went off and the symptoms were back full force. - Anna, US

[964] One-liners (October 2010)

When researching behavioural issues in my 2 yo daughter and 4 yo son, the information from your website helped me to work out that annatto in the Nestle brand yoghurt for kids was sending them off. – Rose, 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. Mmy 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

[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 form 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

[912] 160b: Rash and head banging with bruises from annatto (June 2010)

From about 12 months of age, my son developed intermittent spots, rashes and blotches on his face and around his mouth. On 3 occasions he swelled up in the face, neck and hands (twice at daycare, once at home). We took him to an allergist who told us it was intolerances, gave us a list of additives to avoid, and told us he would outgrow it. The only additive that I could definitely identify at the time was 160b. Each time he ate it he would get develop a rash or tiny spots around his mouth and the blotches would return. Interestingly, at the same time, he also would bang his head in frustration on the floor. It was usually as part of a tantrum, he would drop to the floor and bang his head. He had a permanent bruise in the middle of his forehead for several months (see photo – it's really a bruise upon bruise upon bruise, from banging his head on the floor!) I cannot say for sure if the headbanging stopped at exactly the same time as we eliminated 160b, because I never associated them together, but am now thinking it was related.

As it turned out, the allergist was wrong and he did not outgrow his intolerances, they just manifested in a different way and he became a very difficult child around 2.5 years of age... At 3 years of age we went additive free for 6 weeks, and while this did help, it was not enough, so we have now been failsafe since Oct 2007. He is very sensitive to sals, sensitive to amines and cannot tolerate some additives. – by email, Vic

[911] 160b: Head banging stopped when additives were removed (June 2010)

My son is 2 and spent approx 18 mths headbanging. I can't say for sure, but it could possibly have been approx the time we removed 160b from his diet that he stopped. I removed 160b along with the other additives you recommend avoiding to help manage my son's behaviour. It has seemed to work very well. Adjusting his diet has made being a parent so much more enjoyable and I would like to thank you for this.

We removed the 160b (and all the other additives) approx 5 -6 months ago. We had a major relapse at Easter. This confirmed my suspicions and made my husband realise that the food additives did affect our child.

On looking back, our son stopped headbanging around this time, but I can't say whether it was as a result of the changed diet or not. I didn't realise until seeing your talk a few weeks ago, the headbanging could be related to 160b. The foods my son ate that contained 160b were cheese slices, margarine and yoghurt. I'm sure there would have been others, but these are the ones he ate every (or almost every) day. – Heather, by email

[910] 160b: Annatto related head banging in a 2 year old (June 2010)

My two year old daughter was banging her head about ten times per day. I was giving her 'no artificial colours, flavours, preservatives' yoghurt but I didn't know to avoid annatto. When I changed to a different brand (no annatto), she only had one episode of head banging in the next two days. – by email, NT

[909] 160b: Head banging in a 3 year old (June 2010)

I am a fan of your work and have been looking at the Head Banging information, I am going to make sure we avoid 160b because I think that causes my 3 year old son to do head banging. My son has been eating custard, yoghurt (I have switched to the Jalna brand this week), and ice cream (home ice-cream treasure troves, lots of colours in it, so stopped them). He would generally have custard or yoghurt in the morning and either ice-cream, custard or yoghurt around 5pm.

I have taken 160b out of his diet, which I will do for a few weeks and then re-introduce it to see what happens. His head banging can be to put him to sleep and during the night and very early in the morning, approx 5am. He banged his head in his cot, which was probably around the time he started eating solids, custard and baby yoghurt.

Since avoiding annatto and artificial colours his head banging incidents have lessened. He has had one head banging incident this week around 5am in the morning on Thursday morning so he may have had something at child care that caused it. They do have Yoplait yoghurt on alternate days, so they would have had it on Wednesday morning. – Caryn, by email

[908] 160b: irritability, defiance, head and body banging (June 2010)

We adopted our son from Russia two years ago (he is now three). He is sensory seeking and delayed in speech. We have only recently uncovered a link between his food and behavior, particularly with

Annatto. It makes him hyper, sleepless, defiant, irritable, and a body banger against furniture (not limited to head banging), starting within 1-2 hours and lasting up to 24 hours.

Our son had been seeing an occupational therapist 2x's per month for sensory seeking behaviors. The OT recommended looking into a link between nutrition and behavior. We met with an allergist first. Her tests proved negative for protein allergies. She suggested that we start saving food labels any time we suspected reactions and compare them for common ingredients. The first food we noticed was Pepperidge Farm Cheddar Goldfish Crackers. Our son was very stimulated and not able to nap. I saw Annatto listed and wondered what it was. I did an internet search and found your website and others. The next time I saw a reaction, Annatto was in the peach yogurt I had fed him. On this particular day at naptime, he sat backwards in his rocking chair and banged it continually into the wall.

We started the Feingold program here in the U.S. and, as you probably know, it does not address Annatto so we eliminated Annatto as well. Our son's issues decreased within the first week. He was less hyper, more compliant, and able to sleep better, except for one noticeable withdrawal episode - his first on-the-floor kicking temper tantrum. My favorite result to cite is when I asked him to put books away. He answered "Okay, Mama" and did it right away. This is the sweet little boy who was there all along. I hate the idea that the foods I thought were good for him were causing him to misbehave and causing me frustration. We are happy to be Annatto-free now.

We are finding it hard to identify products with Annatto since it is not always stated by name or number in the ingredients list. We are learning to stay away from products with "natural flavors & colors" even if Feingold approved. There are many products that we have since cut out of his diet after discovering the Annatto link.

Changing our son's food and skin care products was easier than I ever imagined. He hardly notices, except for the times I have to say no to certain foods that do not have good things in them for him. It does take extra effort but it is well worth it. Still, I look forward to the day when the food-behavior link is widely accepted, forcing companies to eliminate these harmful additives from our supermarket shelves. – by email, USA

[907] 160b: agitated, uncontrollable, full of energy, hyperactive (June 2010)

I have 2 boys, aged 3 and 1 who both react badly to annatto. About half an hour after our 3 year old has had something with annatto in he is uncontrollable, agitated, full of energy, really full on. Hyperactive is how someone has described it.

I had read about annatto by chance and at first didn’t think much of it but I mentioned it to my husband who said he reacted to red and yellow colours as a child so I stopped buying anything with 160b in it. I can’t say I noticed anything for a while but one day we had dinner at a friend’s place and our 3 yo was offered some ice cream. I didn’t think to check it. Within half an hour our son was a nightmare. Kicking, screaming, purposefully doing things to annoy/upset us, refusing to sleep and thrashing out etc. My husband and I were shocked - what had happened to our child? Suddenly the penny dropped and I called to ask if the ice cream had 160b in it - it did! Since then we’ve also seen

reactions to cheese, custard and yoghurt (at daycare until I asked not to give annatto to him). – Silvia, NSW

[906] 160b: Restless legs and sleep disturbance (June 2010)

At various times over recent months I have suffered with restless legs and a disturbed night's sleep. Today I decided to investigate the ingredients of the fish fingers we had for dinner last night, and found that they contained 160b. I believe that this colour is most likely the cause of my restless legs and sleep disturbance. I will therefore be avoiding it at all costs in the future.

… One month later …Since I've stopped eating the fish fingers I've had no more restless legs. I'm convinced that it is the 160b causing them. I've since eaten the fish fingers without the batter and had no ill effects.

I've noticed that 160b is in so many foods. Bulla's mini icecreams too. What a pity. They claim to be free of artificial flavours and colours, but still contain the natural colour 160b.I was hoping to give them to my kids until I read the ingredients list.

Many times in past years I have suffered with restless legs at night and hadn't known what caused them. Perhaps it was 160b then as well. I wasn't taking any notice of what was in my food then. Thank-you for such informative and helpful reading. – Sue C, NSW

[905] 160b: Screaming, angry, yelling, defiant and hysterical (June 2010)

Our journey through the numbers maze has recently brought us face to face with 160b. We have discovered through accidental trial and error that our 5 year old daughter who can be the most bright, fun, playful and intelligent little girl can be reduced to a little monster by this "natural" additive. It is so horrible to watch. When I know that she has had something with 160b, we wait for the ticking time bomb. It is usually anywhere from a few hours later it starts and can last for a day or more ... she turns into a screaming, angry, yelling, defiant and hysterical little girl. It breaks my heart. She knows why she gets like that, but there is no reasoning with her when she is in that place. We just wait for her to fall asleep ... only to wake up in the morning like a bear with a sore head.

We first became aware of 160b about a year and a half ago. Custard was the culprit. My mum was staying with us at the time and she was amazed as well when we found out that the custard was the link to her behaviour. She would have the custard at night as dessert and hey presto in the morning the grumpy bum would awake. Cranky, whingey, defiant and tantrums. It would take around about 24 hours for her to come back to us! Ice cream is another one. Every Sunday we would all go down and get icecreams ... same thing (of course this is all in hindsight). Monday morning our alter ego/grumpy daughter would wake up and it would take until about Wednesday to get back to some sort of normalcy only to repeat the cycle again the following Sunday. Now we buy the Peters vanilla icecream and natural icecream cones without colour and have our Sunday icecreams at home. – Sarah B, NSW

[903] 160b: Attraction to the colour yellow (June 2010)

My 6 and a half year old daughter has been diagnosed with PDD-NOS. Since about 6 months of age, we have given her those kids yoghurts that you buy in 6 packs with the kids themes like Nemo and Bob the builder. We thought that because she wouldn't drink milk we needed to give her a dairy substitute, and that they would suffice.

While being a generally placid child since birth, she displayed difficulty concentrating on tasks, a great attraction to the colour yellow, meltdowns at times such as leaving a friend's house or upon being denied a request, sneaky poos, bedwetting, and poor fine motor skills. She was assessed as having a severe speech delay when 3 and a half. Her drawing was at best scribbling in a general area, and she had great problems following dotted outlines of alphabet letters. She displayed very poor short term memory, and repetitive behaviours. She was also wanting food all the time, although she is not overweight. She only drinks water, has never eaten confectionery, has ice cream on the odd occasion, but otherwise generally eats rice bubbles, weetbix, watermelon, grapes, apples, pears, occasionally custard, and plain biscuits. Dinner is usually either rice, pasta or mashed potato with steamed veggies and fish, chicken or beef with no added sauces.

Recently we were made aware of your book and in particular, the adverse effects of the 160b colouring additive. Upon reading up about it in the book, we also looked at the fed up website where we noticed the link to PDD-NOS. After reading some of the testimonials and realising that many of the other parent's experiences were sounding familiar, we decided to eliminate 160b from her diet.

We initially stopped the kids' yoghurts, which she had been having up to 5 a day, on 22 February 2009. Within about 4 or 5 days her drawing had improved remarkably, she could follow dotted lines correctly, her concentration to tasks jumped, not one meltdown occurred, her sneaky poos stopped, bedwetting reduced, and her speech started to improve noticeably. After noticing these improvements, we then looked at the rest of her diet and switched to Brumbys bread, eliminated anything else that we thought had 160b such as custard, switched to A2 or Jersey mik, and stopped using fabric conditioner. We have noticed over the last month that she seems to have matured noticeably, is more compliant, and is more focussed on cognitive tasks. Her teachers and tutors have all noticed a dramatic improvement in her learning ability. She no longer seeks food constantly, has lost her attraction to the colour yellow, has mostly stopped her repetitive behaviour, and her short term memory is markedly better. In fairness, we also started a reward scheme to help stop the sneaky poos at about the same time. However, she is a bit unique in that except for the 160b element, she was virtually following a failsafe style diet already. So we have been quite surprised that it seems that removing 160b has had a dramatic effect for her. -Sharon, Qld

[890] 160b: Head banging and annatto (February 2010)

I have removed the additive 160b from my 2 year olds diet and had the most amazing result. A friend attended one of your talks, came to work the next day and told me about the additive 160b because of my daughter's head banging - mainly on all fours and banging the forehead on the ground, sometimes against a wall, but not often, mainly the floor. I then proceeded to check the foods I gave her and eliminated anything with this additive in it. Within 1 week the head banging

stopped. She would get in the position when have a tantrum, but there was no head banging. After four months with not having this in her diet, by accident, she had 3 teaspoons of custard (at Grandma's) and was head banging within 1/2hr. I think this is proof enough for me that this additive is the cause. – by email, NSW (described by the friend in story #583)

[889] 160b: Sooky (complaining, whingeing, sad) behaviour after annatto (February 2010)

When I first started eliminating additives I noticed the change in behaviour of my two year old daughter and her five year old brother after eating 160b. They would both be very 'sooky' for want of a better word. The slightest thing would have them cry and get all emotional. I noticed it would happen within an hour or two of eating something and could last for a full 24 hours, very frustrating. Before that I had no idea what 160b was and thought that yoghurt, processed cheese slice and plain vanilla icecream were healthy food. My daughter is now six and we just avoid stuff like that, we always get the same old things that we know are safe - Emma, by email

[888] 160b: Defiant, teary, mega tantrums after annatto (February 2010)

I have had great results with my daughter now 4 with a generally additive free, low chemical diet with improvements in behaviour, going to sleep etc (used to have many major tantrums, defiance, took 2 hours to go to sleep). 160b is a big culprit. It makes my daughter extremely defiant, teary and she throws mega tantrums. (It's so hard to educate my mum - as 160b is in so many "healthy foods" yoghurt, icecreams, etc). Our friends' son is a headbanger when he eats annatto. – Tamsin, Vic

[887] 160b: Behavioural reaction to vitamins with annatto (February 2010)

I first noticed the annatto connection with my son specifically with processed cheese singles, so I try to keep him away from those and generally don't have a problem, or if so, it is only small. Recently, we were away for almost a week, and when we came back, he started taking these "gummy vites" children's vitamins ("all natural" and sure enough colored with all natural annatto) he hadn't had for some time, and it was like a switch went off and the symptoms were back full force.- Anna, USA

[886] 160b: Totally hyperactive due to annatto in cereal (February 2010)

I'm pretty certain my 9yo son reacts to 160B -after a week spent at my mother's where I'd stupidly, and innocently bought Cheerios when I was in a hurry. I didn't notice the word annatto, looking just for numbers. He had it every day for breakfast and was TOTALLY hyperactive every night – it took me a week to work out the link! – Karen, by email

[884] 160b: Marlene's story: annatto 160b and IBS (November 2009)

First, may I tell you my husband is a retired Allergist and Immunologist and he observed my IBS experiences then elimination of them. For more than 40 years I had diarrhea and severe intestinal pain. The symptoms changed as the years passed. It went from occasional to frequent and from mild to severe. This leads me to believe it is dose and frequency related. The four years prior to my discovery that annatto was the problem for me, it was daily and severe. I would get an excruciating stomach ache with bloating after 20 minutes of ingestion of an annatto product. After another 20 minutes I had an emergency run to the WC and a long bout with painful diarrhea followed by many

more trips to the WC. Then, I was enervated and just wanted to do nothing and sometimes for days after. I wasn't lactose intolerant nor did I have Celiac Sprue (which the doctors considered). In 2005, after a colonoscopy, my GI diagnosed me with IBS. The symptoms continued until 2006, when I was able to pinpoint what caused my IBS symptoms.

On a 37 day trip to Europe, I had no symptoms and was "normal". I thought about what I was eating in the States and not in Europe. Coffee Mate came to mind. I was asymptomatic the entire trip except for one cup of coffee with a non-dairy product on the plane. Aha! Back in the States, I stayed off Coffee Mate and was fine. 30 days later I tried it and the IBS returned. A few weeks later I ate a scoop of vanilla ice cream; IBS again. What they had in common was annatto, so I researched annatto. There are hundreds of papers on annatto but not one linking annatto to IBS. My husband ordered pure annatto and experimented on me. I got the full-blown IBS when we shared a glass of water with annatto. He didn't. Annatto predictably results in IBS symptoms of intestinal pain and diarrhea in me. It doesn't make sense I could be the only one who gets IBS symptoms from Annatto! - Marlene 2009 mmarlenemm@hotmail.com

[883] 160b: Another report of annatto and irritable bowel symptoms (November 2009)

I am a 43 mother and have done the RPA elimination diet twice. I have Colitis and my big 3 "no-no's" are: annatto 160b, synthetic antioxidants such as BHA 320, and sorbates. Of these, annatto is the worst. – Kate, NSW

[882] 160b: Yet another report of annatto and irritable bowel symptoms (extract from [464])

Seven years ago at the age of 55 I had a very nasty gastro-intestinal virus which led to CFS and IBS. Because of the severity of the IBS, I had many tests - some nasty, with scary implications. Finally, a very helpful dietitian (who works closely with the RPAH allergy unit) put me onto the elimination diet nearly 2 years ago. We have found that I have numerous intolerances: lactose, gluten, salicylates, amines, soy, MSG, sorbitol, sulphites, benzoates, annatto - to name a few.... – by email

[881] 160b: Week-long rages from annatto 160b (November 2009)

Our family has been (mostly) failsafe since our older son was diagnosed with autism and multiple food intolerance in 2003.

Last year for some months I was allowing a chocolate coated icecream on a stick containing annatto 160b, once a week I bought a box to share with the kids after shopping.

I had thought it would be ok as our very food sensitive older son didn't react noticeably to the 160b challenge.

Our now 5 year old younger son's behaviour rapidly went downhill until he was a truly horrible little boy, who physically attacked his siblings, flew off the handle at the slightest little thing, roaring and shaking with anger, things were broken in our house including a glass door and a bucket over his brother's head which drew blood! The behaviour followed a pattern each week of a couple of truly horrible days slowly getting less awful over the course of a week. So I had already figured out it was a food eaten once a week, around shopping day, but still hadn't thought of the icecream. Of course

as soon as I woke up to it, the icecream was out the door, and our lovely boy and calm home returned. I've since tested annatto 160b a few times both deliberately and accidently and the horrible week long rage returned. Annatto 160b would have to be one of our family's most hated baddies! - Karen, Qld

[880] 160b: Autistic symptoms due to yellow and annatto colorings in the US (November 2009)

We were told by pediatricians and individuals in the child development field that my son was autistic when he was 2 1/2 years old. He was extremely sensitive to certain fabrics and clothing against his skin. He could not speak so that we could understand him (he had his own language) and would display fits of anger when we could not understand him. He would close himself into his own little world at times and not want to socialize with our family or other children. He could not jump, he could not run or do simple movements that most children his age had already mastered.

We enrolled him in a special program for children who were developmentally delayed - he was in speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy 4 days a week.

He progressed well in the program but continued to have additional setbacks. He developed asthma and eczema and the fits continued. He started kindergarten with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) that continued to include the different therapy sessions and also added intervention for him with regard to the regular classroom activities.

I would find cheese wrappers behind our recliner, his favorite food was ANYTHING with cheese. We continued to work with different therapists and the school system up until he was in second grade.

By the grace of God, I was in my chiropractor's office waiting to be seen and I picked up a book in his waiting room that was about ADD, ADHD, ODD and Autism in children. I randomly opened it to a chapter that described my son in every sentence. Until I read that chapter I had never even paid attention to Annatto or Yellow food colorings. It was worth a shot.

It took me almost 6 weeks to clear my son from any artificial yellow food coloring. It was like living with a child drug addict. He craved anything yellow and would cry uncontrollably, throw temper tantrums, and sleep and sleep. A short while after we cleared his diet (I even packed his school lunches) his teacher asked me in for a conference. His reading score had gone from a kindergarten level to a second grade level in almost 9 weeks!!!!!

My son is now 12 years old and will be going into the seventh grade. He no longer has an IEP or any therapeutic intervention. He is an Honor Roll student, plays football and is active in the Boy Scouts. He no longer needs any medication for asthma and his eczema is gone. He knows that he has an addiction/allergy to annatto and yellow food coloring so he also is very aware to read every label and "just say no" when offered something that he can not have.

The yellow food colorings cause him to be hyperactive and then he crashes. The Annatto however, seems to be the additive that causes him to have the addictive symptoms. I read once that the annatto seed was once made into a paste and used as war paint in a particular tribe. Well, after watching my son once he has had the annatto I can see why warriors would be successful in battle under its influence.

In addition to affecting him through his food colors also affect him through medications and hygiene products. We noticed that once when he used shampoo with artificial yellow the skin on his neck broke out every time he showered. Also, chapstick or other products that go on skin make him itch.

This school year my son begged me to let him eat some things that our school cafeteria provides. I reluctantly agreed, after all he is going to have to make his own decisions about what he puts in his body as he gets older and is out without me more. It isn't that he was eating things that contained yellow or annatto but he was eating foods that are processed. He has had the stomach flu twice and has had headaches more frequently, plus his muscles have begun to cramp more and more. Last week we made the decision for me to resume packing his lunch and I think that we both already notice a difference.

There is no doubt in my mind that the rise in autism, ADHD, ADD, etc. is a direct consequence of our trend toward processed "quick" food. I feel so blessed to have read that chapter and found my son. Thank you for making a difference. – Rhonda, USA

[879] Miraculous change in extreme sleeping problems (November 2009) COURAGE AWARD

I was a single mother living alone away from family support, breastfeeding and juggling a wonderful son who at 12 months was barely sleeping 4 hours a day. Most days he looked as if he had drunk a can of "red bull" - eyes rolling, twitching and distant - and sleep only ever seemed to come lightly for short periods once he was beyond exhausted.

He had a rash all over his body that just kept spreading and it made me cry watching him tear at it all day and all night without any relief.

At 12 months I put him into a local day care centre for 2 days a week for some sort of break (sleeping sometimes in the car just around the corner too tired to make it home to sleep after dropping him off). He was a real handful there as he would not settle and ever sleep and would upset all the other babies with his screaming.

I was beside myself by the time I swallowed what pride a new sleepless mum had left and sought every kind of assistance I could - my baby health nurse, my local doctor, and then another doctor all said it was normal (as they all shrugged their shoulders) and the eczema was a lifetime hereditary thing ...

I was even assessed at a local government "sleep clinic" on the gold coast - an awful experience with him not sleeping at all for them and them saying 20 hours without sleep "may be normal for him " - (bugger me !!)

After my lowest darkest point whereby at about 14 months he barely slept in 40 mins increments I was sent to the state children's sleep school in Brisbane. The basic program philosophy is about controlled crying - but that wasn't his problem …

It was a 5 day hellish event I would wish on no one. He screamed and cried for the first 3 days solid and set new limits in sleep deprivation - made easier the 3rd day only because he totally lost his

voice and his screams couldn't be heard !!! By day 4 he slept (passed out) from sheer exhaustion - so that was apparently a success and I was sent home day 5!!

After only a day or two at home it was obvious there was no improvement.

The next few weeks as I contemplated our future without support, sleep or potential for work as things stood really took its toll, until I was blessed to come across a pharmacist in our local pharmacy. She sat me down and really talked me through the failsafe approach - and really took the time to make it sink in. I was an unwilling participant as when you are so exhausted anything new seems to be insurmountable.

It took 4 days!!! only 4 days !! from having someone waking 8 times a night to 2 times a night!!! from sleeping 4 hours a day to 8 hours - and 10 hours by the end of the week. Once I switched to A2 milk the loop was complete and he started sleeping the night through by the end of week 2. The change was nothing short of miraculous.

For my son to go from the least favourite boy in his kindy to the favourite almost within a week!! It was like someone had handed me a new son.

He became an affectionate loving inquisitive boy that every mum would be so proud of - no tantrums, no fits of rage, renewed energy and able on concentrate on things so much better he simply bloomed, like watching a wilted flower come back to life after rain.

His rash completely healed - completely!! He is now 2.5 years and it has never returned!!

When I tell people about all the positive changes we have had on the diet, they seem to think the diet I fed him before failsafe was really poor. They assume it was full of red cordial, McDonalds, coloured commercial lollies etc but I was aware of colours and MSG and he NEVER had those. At the time I was following the diet recommended by the child care centre. It was the sulphur dioxide in dried fruits, the hidden nitrates in meats, and natural colour 160b I wasn't aware of, that were our biggest problems, also I was breast feeding at the time and was having more "junk food" and stimulants from comfort eating to keep me functioning so he was getting it that way. I realise my mistake in overdoing a "healthy diet" mostly consisting of a mega high salicylates, high amines and glutamates!! and although I was careful about colours and some preservatives, my son's biggest and most immediate reactions came from fish/ meats/ and preserved fruits.

Having followed all the information you have put out there in the Failsafe Cookbook my son has thrived!! He has come from behind to be the tallest and fittest in his class. The effect this failsafe lifestyle has had on Patrick has been evident to all who knew him "before diet" as we call it.

I often have people ask me about your work, especially from his childcare centre as they have followed his progress and it's so rewarding to see the individual but still dramatic change it has on other babies, toddlers and children.

I get angry when I think of the torment and the lost first 12 months of his life - and that a children's hospital in a week could not assist or pick up what a pharmacist did in seconds - but promise in my

own prayers of thanks for you and the pharmacist that I will do my best to help those similar suffering mums that cross my own path. Thank you. - Patrick's proud mum, Qld

[852] One-liners (August 2009)

A year has now passed since we went Failsafe and I just thought I should drop you and note to say..... Thankyou! The difference this diet has made to my boys is amazing...it was like taking them back and getting them exchanged for ones that worked 'properly' - Miriam by email.

When strictly failsafe, we have a wonderful loving attentive child. Your works have been as no doubt you have heard before life saving for our family. Although considered a little weird at times for his diet, I'd rather him known as weird than that naughty kid, shoved in the too hard basket. - Peta, Vic

Just wanted to inform you of another success story in regards to my 9-year-old. We've been on failsafe for 7 weeks now and my son is now calm, settled and an absolute delight thanks to your books. I've spread the gospel around my local area with many parents and teachers genuinely interested. His teachers are all very supportive as they've seen the metamorphosis right before their very eyes – by email, Melbourne.

My story is similar to many on your website: a 5yo boy and a 2yo girl. We had concerns with our little boy, realising he did not seem happy, energetic, compliant, everything was negative, and a drama. After many bad bad evenings and lots of screaming / crying and being upset that my child was not happy we decided to watch the DVD read as much info as we could and did something about it. Well, we now have a very happy child with a much bigger control on what goes into their mouths and the outcome I can say is also a complete turnaround. So ... thank you - Michelle, NSW.

I was pretty annoyed when I checked the yoghurt ingredients and found 160b in the vanilla. I had been buying the yoghurt for my 4 year old as it is no preservatives, artificial colour, flavour etc. His behaviour can definitely be seen in the side effects outlined in the book! - Cassandra by email

[817] Nose full of swollen tissue – now sleeping better (July 2009)

My 6 year old son is allergic to dust, cats, and sensitive to some food additives. So far we have had reactions to 621-635 and 160b and are looking at 282 now. Just wanting to thank you for putting us on the right track to start with. Our son's nose was 90% full of swollen tissue. He was working 20% harder to breath giving him terrible headaches etc. He is now starting to feel better, sleeping better, behaving better (prev we were told it was adhd - have my doubts now) and generally feeling better - by email

[800] 200, 160b, 320: Big "no-no's" cause cramping and diarrhea (June 2009)

I am a 43 mother and have done the RPA elim diet. I have Colitis that was triggered by a single episode of food poisoning ten years ago. It took a long time to get a diagnosis of microscopic colitis. For a long time I was told that it was irritable bowel. Finally a colonoscopy and biopsy showed it - a very under-diagnosed condition. My big 3 "no-no's" are: annatto 160b, synthetic antioxidants such as BHA 320, and sorbates. All of those cause cramping and diarrhoea. – Kate, by email

[695] Cough and bedwetting due to soy (November 2008)

I found your book about 10 months ago after my four year old son Jacob was hospitalised for an asthma attack combined with the dreaded influenza A that children were dying of. Well, that was enough to scare me into action. We started the diet as soon as I had finished reading the book and soon the children all became well …I couldn't remember a time when Jacob hadn't had a snotty nose or cough.

Then three months ago, Jacob's behaviour started to escalate. He also developed this phlegm that he couldn't seem to get rid of. He wasn't sick as such, no temperature just a very phlegmy cough. I asked my doctor about it and he said it was an irritation and would never go away. Well I didn't believe that for a second because it went away when we first started the diet.

Jacob's behaviour was so awful I was at the end of my tether to the point where I didn't want my husband to leave the house and leave me with the kids. I went to your checklist of common mistakes (I thought I had the diet down pat by now). It said Annatto 160b - in the soy yoghurt I was giving the kids. So I started making my own and after a week I had a little angel again. Unbelievable. No more Annatto 160b for our family - never again.

But Jacob still had the cough. Then I stopped making soy yoghurt for a week. Jacob drinks ricemilk instead of soy milk anyway and I noticed a difference in his phlegm. After three weeks without soy, the phlegm, snotty nose and funny rings under his eyes had gone. He also stopped wetting the bed, and that returned when I made a slip up recently. – *Carolyn, SA*

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

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

[637] One-liners (May 2008)

- My son hasn't been hospitalised with asthma since we started failsafe two years ago but I have just found out that his urticaria can be caused by food, especially annatto as he accidentally ate quite a bit at vacation care over the school holidays - email, NSW.

[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

[599] Anita's speech: a 10-year-old tells her school about food intolerance (November 2007) WINNER OF THE COURAGE AWARD

Near the end of 2006 I was getting sick and tired of all the kids at my old school ripping me off and teasing me for being on a 'diet'. In October I had a school project to do, something that we were passionate about. I asked my teacher if I could talk about the diet. So I spoke in front of 380 children, parents and teachers at Maitland Public School. See my speech below.

Parents, Teachers and Classmates,

In June 2005 mum put myself and my brother on a diet as I was very hated and always getting into trouble and even being called 'Hekyl and Jekyll' by our school counsellor. No matter how hard I tried, I could not seem to behave better.

At first we hated the 'diet' because we couldn't have our 'normal' food and we did not like being teased some of the kids at our school, some of you did not invite us to birthday parties because of the diet. We soon realised how much better we felt and how much better we were behaving, the food wasn't that bad, it was really good and good for us, so we both decided that when people ripped us off we would say 'We are not on a diet, but an 'Adventure', we are not made to do it, we choose to because it will make us healthier'. So everyone in our family and friends call it our Adventure, not a diet.

On the adventure we have found that I react to Amines as well as the artificial stuff and especially 160b, and my brother reacts to Sulphites and the artificial stuff as well. Mum also found that I get very sick when I eat stuff with 160b which is advertised as natural, which I guess it is but they do not tell you it can make you extremely sick. When I eat these types of foods, I get very irritable, cranky, aggressive, violent, black bags under my eyes and sometimes would bang my head against things to try and make the pain go away. I do not mean to do this but I cannot stop myself from doing it.

I have not had and neither has my brother any problems since June. It feels so much better to able to control myself and not get into trouble. I know that some people especially teachers I have already upset, and sadly I know no matter how hard I try or how good I get, you will not change your thoughts about me, so I have decided with my mum, dad and brother to move to the new school that is being built, just around the corner from our house to start a new 'Adventure' and hopefully will make new friends and people will accept me for who I am.

We cannot believe that the big companies are watching out for us, because they aren't, if they were, they would not be putting all of this stuff in our food when it makes us sick. They are more interested in getting money, which is wrong. Once you start looking at what is in our foods, it will make you sick to think that is what we are putting into our bodies.

Just by cutting out the additives, preservatives and natural things like 160b, you will see how much better you will feel, not just for us kids, but the adults as well. Our Adventure really has made a huge difference. Give it a try, it is a lot of work to make sure you don't eat the bad things, but if you have the support of your family and friends, it makes a great difference.... My brother and I are very lucky, we have mum, dad, grandma, grand-dad and our church all supporting us. Church, Before & After school care phone mum when they are having 'party' days and mum makes something that we can enjoy.

Parents, all you are pretty much doing is going back to basic eating like my parents and grandparents used to do not that long ago. We are all tired, but mum & dad both work full time and can manage to do this for us - to make us healthier. The more people that do this then the quicker the big companies will click and realise we won't be buying their unhealthy food.

Thank you for listening. I hope it makes a difference.

[584] 160b: 'Croup cough' from annatto (see also Annatto factsheet) (November 2007)

My four-year-old son has peanut, egg and dairy allergies and is anaphylactic so as you can imagine I spend hours reading labels. We have been buying So-Good products for about two years and generally he is fine. Recently he has been having the creamy vanilla for dessert and having what I thought was a croup cough. I soon realised the nights he didn't have it there was no "croup cough". After several calls to Sanitarium and speaking with the dietician, I have worked out that it must be the annatto E160b causing a reaction. – by email

[583] 160b: Head banging and annatto (see also Annatto factsheet) (November 2007)

Just thought I would let you know, after your recent talk in Maitland I went back to work and told a friend about annatto 160b as her two-year-old daughter had been splitting her head open head banging. My friend has kept her daughter off the annatto for a week now and her daughter has stopped head banging. She still gets in the position when she is throwing a tantrum but doesn't bang her head. Amazing! This is only additive she has removed! – by email, NSW

[562] 160b: Yellow addiction (May 2007)

My son was restless from the day he was born. His paediatrician told me to not feed him dairy or wheat and suggested I feed him meat and vegetables and fruit for the first year of his life. When he was one, I decided to broaden his diet a bit and started feeding him vanilla ice cream. I didn't understand at the time, but he started throwing the most awful tantrums and head banging. He became obsessed with the colour yellow. He only wanted to wear yellow clothes, draw with yellow pencils and chose toys that were yellow. My friends constantly commented on his yellow addiction. I used to feed him corn and cheese omelettes for dinner with vanilla ice cream and banana for dessert. I'd mix the banana in thoroughly so the ice cream looked more yellow. It wasn't until 18 months later that I started learning about nasty food chemicals, and learned that annatto 160b natural yellow colouring was causing a lot of problems. When we got together with other mothers, he'd go straight for yellow food and always want yellow drinks. It was a bit of a joke really. He'd choose yellow lollies over other colours and when I asked him what colour he wanted his room

painted, he of course said Yellow. I stopped allowing him food with 160b in it, but still let him have it when he went out. My friends thought I was over the top with food.

One day after meeting with my friends, and my son eating their yellow food, he went off the rails. I managed to get him into the car, (which is hard when they stiffen their bodies like a board) and drove him to my friend's house. He was screaming in his car seat, Let me out, let me out and was struggling like crazy in his seat. We drove up her driveway and my friend said Oh my god, what's happened to Liam? I explained this is what happens when he eats bad food chemicals. It was only after this that she actually believed me. I then became strict and totally eliminated it from his diet. His headbanging stopped and his outrageous tantrums stopped also. I then realised that his obsession with yellow was caused from an addiction to yellow food. When I eliminated it from his diet, he began to choose other colours to wear. He'd choose other coloured lunchboxes, drink bottles and hats. I've never heard any other parent mention the colour phenomenon, but I still believe it was connected to his addiction to 160b. – Helen, NSW (see similar stories [880] and [983]

[453] One liners (August 2006)

Our 6 year old son's urticaria and rhinitis have improved dramatically by avoiding cats and dustmites (for allergies) and additives annatto 160b and flavour enhancers 621-635. He is now starting to feel better, sleeping better and behaving better (previously we were told it was ADHD but I have my doubts now).

Food additives are a big issue with consumers and getting bigger all the time. – excerpt from an email from a failsafer to a food manufacturer – thanks to Helen.

[451] Severe eczema and cradlecap in a fully breastfed baby (August 2006)

My two and a half year old daughter has had severe eczema and cradle cap since she was a few months old, I never made the connection between the eczema and food allergy because she wasn't even on solids when we first noticed the eczema. She was fully breastfed and I am embarrassed to admit that it didn't occur to me that what I ate may be causing the rash! I had her to the doctor plenty of times over her first two years and came away with all sorts of creams and lotions, but nothing that worked. (Mind you the doctor never once suggested food allergy either!)

Anyway six months ago she had an allergic reaction to peanut butter, we took her to an allergist who performed skin prick tests and not only is she anaphylactic to peanuts but also allergic to egg and tomato. We eliminated all nuts and egg and tomato from her diet and whilst she improved and her cradle cap went, her skin still didn't clear up. She still scratched a lot (mostly at night), got allergic shiners under her eyes, and always seemed to have a slight cough and a clear runny nose.

I recently got hold of Fed Up with the idea of doing the elimination diet then slowly introducing things back in to see what else may be causing her eczema. I am pleased to tell you that the eczema is now completely cleared up along with all the other symptoms simply due to avoiding all preservatives.

Before going fully failsafe we eliminated all those nasties from our diets and what a difference it has made! I just want to say thank you for what you do and for making it so much easier for parents like

me, who 18 months ago had no idea what 160b or 282 were and thought I was giving my children healthy food with their yoghurt and cheese spread etc. I almost look at my daughter's anaphylactic allergy to peanuts a blessing in disguise, because if not for that I never would have investigated food allergies and would still be obliviously feeding my family all sorts of nasty things.

[385] 160b: "anaphylactic reaction" to annatto (January 2006)

I am a 30 year old Nurse living in the UK. A few days ago I had an anaphylactic reaction that came on within 20 minutes of eating cereal. I ate my usual brand of muesli mixed with some high fibre cereal my hubby bought from our local health food shop. It is called "Ultra Soya & Linseed Bran" made by a company in Australia called Vogels. I had not eaten anything else that morning and looking at the list of ingredients the only ingredient I do not eat regularly is the natural food colour Annatto (160b). My hubby has been looking this up on the net and found many reports of allergies to this. – UK

[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

[354] Argument from 160b and a history of headbanging (Nov 2004)

After only one week (and this was my getting ready to start the diet week) I noticed a definite calmness about my 7 year old son. Then he finished off some icecream and within an hour we had a horrible argument which was like his behaviour from the previous week. I sat and cried this morning as I read the failsafers' stories and the annatto 160b factsheet on the website. My son used to head bang since about 2 years of age – and we still have dents in the walls! I have tried for 5/6 years to track his' diet reactions but they had no rhyme or reason. I just had a psychopath in training. I had always cooked and used behaviour management but there are always those telling stares from other parents and friends - I wasn't tough enough, he was out of control, obviously a single mother working full time produces this "type' of child etc. I didn't make the food intolerance connection until I read your book. - reader, NSW

[147] A day in the life of 160b (annatto) (February 2002)

"We first started the diet as a family 2 years ago to support our baby when she was found to be allergic to peanuts and eggs. My eldest daughter (10) had been diagnosed with mild ADHD and her wild temper tantrums were controlled with sedative medications. On the diet suddenly she became a human being with so much personality. Gone were the temper tantrums, no more holes in walls, smashed toys and windows. For the first time in all her eight years she was able to sit calmly and talk to us. I cried with the realization of how much my little girl had been suffering since birth just because I was feeding her the wrong food.

During the holidays, she went to the local shop to buy a Peters dixiecup icecream. She found they were all sold out so she bought a Cadburys icecream cup containing the dreaded 160b. I was very upset when she got home and told me what she had eaten. I prepared the family for the coming

storm. One hour later it hit with a vengeance. I had to stay in her room with her to protect her from hurting others as well as herself - punching her head, head butting the walls, trying to scratch her skin and flesh off and screaming all sorts of abuse. After an hour and a half of this with patches of having to restrain her, we put her into a soothing bath which usually means the worst of it is over. Not this time. She was worse when she came out and none of us could control her. She tried to run away with only a towel on. She got frustrated when she couldn't undo the gate as well as keep herself covered with the towel. I had locked the back door to stop her from getting inside to me and our three old as I could no longer physically control her. I thought this would give my husband time to come from the lounge room to help me with her. He arrived at my side just as she put her fist through our porch window. We were all showered with glass and my daughter had dozens of little cuts all over her arm. At this moment she lost the crazed look in her eyes and seemed to go into shock. I showered the glass off her, cleaned and dressed her wounds and spent the next hour with her curled up on my lap almost empty of emotion. This episode has affected both my husband and myself in a huge way. We no longer take ANY chances with anything creeping into our diet, especially 160b. If we hadn't known the trigger of her psychotic episode we would have without a doubt had many more days like this that I am sure would have become too much of a strain on our otherwise very happy family. We owe you much gratitude for the knowledge you have shared and continuing efforts to give us up to date information." – reader, by email

Remember that yellow colour annatto 160b is not used in Europe - instead they use the alternative 160a, which is harmless. We are told it is too difficult and expensive to use. European food manufacturers must be cleverer and more compassionate than their Australian counterparts. Not everyone reacts as badly as this child - next day irritability is more common. Headbanging, even in toddlers, seems to be a feature of this additive. This episode demonstrates yet again that here is a harmful additive with the potential to affect many others in more subtle ways. 160b can cause any of the usual reactions. We've even had a report of arthritis associated with this additive.

Copyright: Sue Dengate ABN 72 705 112 854. All information from www.fedup.com.au and associated newsletter and discussion groups is protected by copyright and cannot be copied for profit. It can be reproduced by non-profit organizations with appropriate acknowledgement.