

## Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

[www.fedup.com.au](http://www.fedup.com.au)

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("baby", "infant" keywords only)

[1422] "eczema has now gone completely, bowels now normal and he's generally doing well"  
(January 2017)



First photo prior to failsafe eating. I saw numerous doctors regarding my son's reaction to foods, this includes two allergists, neither mentioned RPAH diet. His eczema has now gone completely, bowels now normal and he's generally doing well thanks to the diet and help from members of this Network. His other symptoms were runny nose, watering eyes, warm to touch, loose bowels/diarrhea and the red skin.

Second photo today, 9 months after starting failsafe. He is still sensitive to sals, dairy and egg but tolerating amines much better and seems to be gaining more tolerance every week. Looking forward to introducing more foods - thanks to Lia.

[1398] **Severe itchy rashes: "salicylates and glutamates are a problem" (July 2016)**

I'm doing the diet for my baby son with eczema and severe itchy rashes. I can't tell you how awful it was - I never took photos when he was at his worst. We're doing it with an excellent dietitian (on our list for Kempsey). Challenges have so far shown that salicylates and glutamates are a problem. The diet has changed my son's life. - 2015 Kempsey Roadshow



Figure 1 Pre failsafe, breastfed only



Figure 2 Glutamate challenge response



Figure 3 Now Failsafe. The scab was left from glutamate challenge

**[1368] My baby was eating all of the very high salicylate fruits and vegetables (November 2015)**

I am a first time mother to a little girl who has just turned one. She was a contented baby who always slept well until 6 months (when I started her on solids). Night time wakings usually consist of severe tummy pain, wind, reflux and very irritable. After that, things got progressively worse. Once we thought it was teething and she was given nurofen (high in salicylate compounds) over a few nights. After having a UTI infection recently things went downhill and she had a major reaction to an antibiotic called Bactrim (syrup contains two benzoate preservatives). Since this episode our daughter has suffered SEVERE reflux and improved after Gaviscon. I found it hard for doctors to believe initially that it was reflux, but found a specialist (paediatric doctor) who examined my daughter and was witness to her wet burping. My specialist has prescribed Nexium and Gaviscon for 6 weeks.

Having looked for answers as to what my child might have, and no help from any GPs I decided to write a diary of food and when these behaviours started. I have tried my daughter on gluten, dairy and wheat free diets with no success.

I truly believe my daughter has a salicylate intolerance. I only came across this after reading a book about baby sleeping habits which mentioned that is a big factor in some children's night waking. Since coming across this, I noticed straight away that foods high in Salicylate saw us having horrendous nights in pain eg. Avocado, watermelon, processed ham and turkey (nitrate preservatives), etc. I was also unsuccessful breast feeding and looking back I had an extremely high intake of tea and other high salicylate foods. My husband and I are both Italian Mediterranean descent. I did have some intolerance when I was a child to strawberries and tomatoes and would have itchiness in the corners of my mouth and fingers and toes and was also quite an anxious child.

UPDATE: My daughter was basically eating all of the fruits and vegetables listed in the very high category of salicylate foods. Since taking away salicylate foods I am seeing a an increase in sleep and a much more settled baby. I look forward to contacting one of the recommended dietitians for more assistance. - Danielle, Qld

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

I have seen first hand what annatto 160b, can do. I am very careful when I shop, look at food labels, with my yellow fedup card. that magnifies everything. My son had some nasty reactions, when he consumed 160b, these included head banging as a baby/toddler. His eyes go glassy, same as when he has consumed artificial colors. Bad headaches as he was older, for myself as the mother migraines from yogurts, also found in plastic cheese, icecream. Another company that needs to remove 160b is Aldi, there were many products a few months ago that contained 160b – Nicole

My daughter reacts to 160B, at 10 months old she would bounce her head off our tiled floor and was all round violent and aggressive. Even now at 3 1/2 if she starts acting out we look back at what she has eaten and 160b is always the culprit – Jennifer

**[1313] 160b: Headbanging caused by 'natural' yellow colour in baby biscuits and soy yoghurt (March 2015)**

I am a frequent visitor to your website as I have a 14mth old boy who is milk protein and food chemical intolerant. Your website is not only of great information but also of great support and comfort knowing that you aren't alone on what sometimes feels like an uphill battle.

My son constantly bangs his head, hits his head along with screaming but always following when something was taken from him so naturally I always believed that he was a determined little boy and was throwing a tantrum but him hitting his head with both palms has increased dramatically.

He is already on a strict diet so I just don't know how to determine whether this behaviour is due to something like annatto or is it just a simple tantrum? He seems to constantly grizzle and seem irritated each day and I am having difficulty finger pointing why.

(after feedback) I have had his diet under control now for eight months and always very careful with anything that is given to him but as you mentioned I was always keeping an eye out for the same reactions as he would previously show in the typical time frame also and did not link the head banging as a reaction. After speaking with his GP and specialist I was told time and time again its normal while tantruming but when he was continually slapping his head I knew it was out of irritation, hence looking into it further.

Sue I must say, that since discovering my son's condition, I am frequently meeting other mums who mention their child's consistent irritable behaviour, tantrums and constant screaming. All of which were the same traits my son had for his first six months, and I can't help but think why aren't intolerances discussed and or elimination diets recommended first? I can understand the difficulty of diagnosing however it is medication free and there is certainly no further harm for the child yet it seems as though it's very rarely even mentioned nor acted on - Jessica.

(Sue comment: Heinz biscotti and a soy yoghurt since were identified as culprits. The Heinz UK biscotti no longer contain annatto. Story submitted March 2011)

Further info:

<http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/additive-and-natural-chemical-factsheets/160b-annatto>

<http://fedup.com.au/factsheets/symptom-factsheets/tantrums>

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

She was only 10months when she started reacting I couldn't believe such a small baby could be so violent. ...- Jennifer

My 11 month old would bounce her head repeatedly off the tiles 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

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

Bub was up hourly, all night every night, on a good night. Now sleeps 12 hours. (Started elimination in February when he was 8 months) – Karissa

My son spent the first nine months of his life miserable and in pain. No one was able to help us. I stumbled across the failsafe diet by accident and tried it in desperation. It worked where nothing else had - Veronica

**[1258] My little Firecracker is now a fierce warrior (February 2014)**

My failsafe baby started high school this week. Twelve years ago I was at breaking point trying to find a reason my baby was covered in eczema, never slept, did frothy green poos, and never smiled. Sue Dengate saved both our lives, literally. My little Firecracker was one of the first babies to join Sue's support group and the affirmation and support I received from others on those groups has seen me forge lifelong friendships. Today my daughter is a fierce warrior. She is eating foods, her body continues to lead the way and we all listen. It's not an easy road by any stretch of anyone's imagination, but this works.

I've recently been reminded of what life was like before Sue pointed me in the right direction and I realised how far we've come. My little Firecracker is the best person she can be, and it's all thanks to you. But it's not just about her and babies. Failsafe also gave me my life back and I do my bit to pay it forward. Thank you Sue, for showing me how – Blanca

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

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

It's not always just salicylates. Gluten can be a major factor. I have had SPD my whole life. It is something I think you learn to cope with but it is so hard for kids to deal with. I somehow managed to graduate from the law school with honours. I pretty much spent the whole of my VCE and law degree studying in the state library in Melbourne (in the dome) where making any noise is strictly forbidden. The only way I could study without feeling the need to punch people out for making noise. The other thing to note is that lots of people don't understand SPD because often people who suffer from it (commonly kids with ADD or ADHD etc) can be quite noisy themselves. If the child is in control of the noise (making it themselves or choosing to listen to it, e.g music), they will cope just fine. It is noises they are not in control of (e.g music or clashing conversations by others) that they can't cope with. My one year old has sensory processing issues with touch not sound. He hates the feel of things touching his hands. When he starts to touch his food he acts as though his hands are burnt (like he's handling a hot potato). Some people have sensory processing issues with bright lights - Emma

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

My son also banged his head he was one - Mel

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

**[1222] Tresillian 'controlled crying' didn't work (August 2013)**

I was sent with my eldest son to the sleep clinic at Tresillian in Sydney (from Canberra 16 years ago) where they fed him bread, tomatoes and vegemite of the first time in his life. Of course, he got worse!!!

He went down to 4 x 15 minute cat naps in 24 hours and they told me he was just stubborn/difficult and to stay the course. After 8 months of persisting with 'controlled crying', I gave up (thank god!) It was only when I found RPAH that he got any peace. 4 month old babies aren't stubborn or difficult - they react entirely to environmental and dietary input.

The child health clinics need to provide this avenue of info – Sheryl by email.

**[1217] Food intolerance list is a mile long, maybe Eosinophilic Oesophagitis too (August 2013)**

I have three kids - a 9.5 month daughter and nearly 7 year old twins (a son and daughter). My youngest is allergic or intolerant to a LOT of things. She is suspected of having Eosinophilic Oesophagitis, which precludes her (and myself as I breastfeed her) from wheat, dairy, soy, eggs, nuts and seafood - plus on top of those allergens, her food intolerance list is a mile long. The only way I have managed to work out what has been troublesome to her is via Fed Up/the support network you have, and working with my dietitian. Our daughter has gone from a screaming, projectile vomiting baby who was borderline failing to thrive, to a generally happy, growing, cheeky little baby who is already starting to talk and nearly walking.

While learning what being FAILSAFE was about, I suspected that maybe we could help our son's impulsive/unsettled/inattentive behaviour, maybe even his bedwetting by looking further into diet. Well, we are only approximately 6 weeks into being fully failsafe and early in the challenges stage, after having removed additives and reduced a lot of them during Term 2, yet his teacher already has noticed the change in him when he is at baseline compared to the challenges. It has improved his confidence and so much more.

In the last 6 months can very confidently say that Fed Up/your network has directly changed my family's life, and many others around me as a result of my experience - Kristan by email.

**[1174] Withdrawal symptoms occur in the first 2 weeks of the diet – 12 reports from failsafers (February 2013)**

\* We booked into a failsafe dietician and started the elimination diet. Our baby son improved a little, and then had textbook withdrawal after a week and a half. In week 3 he slept through the night for the first time in 15 months ...- from story 878

**[1109] One-liners (April 2012)**

'I already can't quite believe how much calmer our 5 month old is in the last few days, and is sleeping much better than a week ago. I wish I'd heard about this before I was pregnant!' - Fiona by email

**[1152] Artificial red colour: cause of seizures in a breastfed baby? (October 2012)**

I am scared for my friend and her one year old breastfed baby. While she is breastfeeding, there are many times when the baby seems to "clamp down" on the breast and briefly stay motionless. Doctors have only recently suggested that these episodes are actually seizures. My friend is addicted to a particular red soft drink (artificially coloured of course) and drinks several litres per day. Could this cause the problem? She refuses to give up this drink and doctors are now saying there could be permanent brain damage. – by email

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

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

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

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

**[1145] Delaying babies due to difficult first babies (October 2012)**

I am a midwife. I came to your talk because of what I am finding with my clients. Those who are having second babies have often left it as long as possible because their first babies were so difficult - crying and unsettled for hours at a time, and sleeping poorly. It seems to be increasingly common. As a nurse, we tell them to eat everything in moderation while breastfeeding but I realise now they may need some more information – from Fedup Roadshow 2012

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

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

**[1021] 635: Ribo rash in a breastfed baby (May 2011)**

Recently I purchased a quality fresh homemade style chicken and leek family pie. On reading the ingredients I was overjoyed that here was a fast food that had failsafe ingredients, listing salt but no stock. Anyway I was hit with severe tiredness, heavy eyes, thirst and unusual (for me) bad mood within one hour of eating it that lasted over 24 hours. My breastfed 10-month old baby had a bit of an unsettled night, bit of a cough and some red blotchy rash on her torso. I knew for sure that there must be an ingredient unlisted like stock or flavour enhancer. I rang the company (who said) there is no stock, just a bit of chicken salt! - chicken salt is often ordinary table salt with added MSG type flavour enhancers such as 621 or 635. – Angela, by email (We would like to hear from anyone who has noticed a similar reaction to flavor enhancers in a baby under 12 months, and whether your baby subsequently developed a peanut, egg, milk or other food allergy:

[suedengate@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suedengate@ozemail.com.au))

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

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

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

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



asking me when he'll grow out of it and suggesting that he's getting better (only because he's eating Failsafe!! He wouldn't be if he wasn't!) and tempting my son with offers of when I'm babysitting you we'll go out & get some REAL food chiko rolls and hot dogs & coke . Real food indeed!! Grrr!!

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

**[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

**[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

**[976] Dry nights and baby's less frequent dirty nappies on diet (July 2008)**

We saw a dietitian and started the elimination diet (including dairy free) 3 weeks ago. We have seen great changes in our children. Our daughter has had 7 dry nights in a row, she is less hyper, less defiant, eczema looks better, no runny nose. Our baby is having less frequent dirty nappies (yeah!). So as you can see it is working for us so far. – Wendy, WA

**[960] Breastfeeding: unsettled 6 mth old became a new baby after 3 days (October 2010)**

I first had contact with Sue way back in 2001, when her article called 'Restless Babies' in Nursing Mothers magazine saved my life!! I went failsafe as I was breastfeeding our unsettled/ ratty 6 mth old baby. We were amazed after she became a new baby after 3 days of diet!! That baby is now 9, and very conscious of the additives that affect her, and knows that by avoiding them, she feels better.- by email. 'Restless babies' article

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

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

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

[http://www.lalecheleague.org.nz/template/articles\\_information/food\\_intolerances.pdf](http://www.lalecheleague.org.nz/template/articles_information/food_intolerances.pdf)

**[928] A2: Dairy free but now happy on a2 yoghurt (July 2010)**

We were very excited to try A2 yogurt - our 6yo daughter developed stomach pains last year which we finally attributed to dairy, and were very pleased that she responded really well to A2. Our baby son was also super-sensitive to cow's milk, while breastfeeding I had to be on a strict dairy-free diet or he'd be in terrible pain. He's now 18 months and the Jalna A2 yoghurt is his favourite food - no tummy pain at all! We've had to be careful not to overdo it - forgot that it was moderate amines - and he can only have the natural because of the salicylate content in the flavoured ones, but he has it either plain or with maple syrup, and thinks it's the best food ever. - Megan, by email

**[899] Really bad eczema in baby (February 2010)**

I have been meaning to write for ages to thank you for the Fed Up work and for the wonderful contacts. I am seeing your recommended dietitian. Previous to changing to a low chemical diet our baby has suffered from really bad eczema since 3 months of age, has been to hospital twice and wet wrapping once. Now he has a small patch under his chin only when I eat a suspect food (shallots, golden syrup etc) and that is all! I am a complete convert and find the Fed Up and RPA books wonderful. It is so hard not to run up to strangers with eczema kids to tell them to at least trial modifying diet to low chemical.

The dietitian is wonderful and very encouraging. I am still able to breast feed our baby, and we are alternating challenging him through my diet and adding a new food for him. He now eats rice and

choko, and I am challenging soy first. The limitations are tough, especially around this time of year, but so worth it for happy healthy children! Thank you, thank you, thank you.... - Natalie, Sydney.

### **[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 to 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

#### **[878] Sleeping problems solved - thanks to sleep webinar (November 2009)**

Calvin was an easy baby, slept well, settled after feeds beautifully and was just lovely. Once we started solids, things started changing for the worse. By 12 months he was waking 3-6 times a night screaming and was impossible to soothe. Only sheer exhaustion put him back to sleep. I looked into all sorts of options for sleep training, but none of them sat well with me as I was sure it was a pain issue, not a sleep issue, so I resisted urging from friends and family to control cry and looked into the possibility of food intolerance.

At that same time, Sue was advertising a webinar on sleep and food intolerance. I registered and joined in on the night. I listened and took notes, but still wasn't convinced this was us, I just hated the idea of a restricted diet for Calvin.

By 14 months things were desperate and my husband and I were chronically sleep deprived. We booked into a failsafe dietician and started the elimination diet. Calvin improved a little, and then had textbook withdrawal after a week and a half. In week 3 he slept through the night for the first time in 15 months and then slept through for another 3 nights after that. We have had some up and down nights since then, but nothing like the screaming fits he used to have. 7 weeks on, he has slept through 10 full nights and only woken once or twice for a pat most of the other nights. Now we are slowly introducing challenges, but our need for sleep catch up and Calvin's age has meant that we have opted for the slow route rather than overload challenges. This means we still have a long way to go, but have felt very encouraged by the Fed Up website, book and cookbook - Thanks Sue for all your hard work!! - Pippa, by email

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

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

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

Our baby suffered severe eczema for 8 months and was in wet bandages for 4 months straight. We were also using advantan cortisone cream on her every night. At 7 months old both my breastfed baby and myself (mother) did the RPA Elimination Diet which made no difference to her skin condition. She has allergies to dairy, soy, egg and peanut which she never consumed herself and which I stopped eating when she was 6 months old and still breastfed. After the dermatologist from the RCH said that it was most likely a food intolerance causing the eczema (she was 13 months), I contacted you again and then tried removing salicylates from her diet again as she was no longer breastfed. Within about 5 days she went from being in wet bandages, very itchy, irritated and hyperactive to skin almost completely clear and requiring only tiny amounts of cortisone. She also became a much happier baby. We have since discovered she also gets eczema from eating wheat. She is on a very limited diet because of her food intolerance and allergies but we are giving her some Neocate to try to make up for what she's missing out on. Thanks so much for the tip on salicylates, although it is hard feeding her on a limited diet, it was much harder seeing her suffering, using steroids on her skin and keeping up with the constant bandaging. – by email, Vic

**[831] 282: Runny nose due to bread preservative calcium propionate (July 2009)**

My fourth baby had the same terrible broken night sleep pattern as the other three. After struggling for eight months, she did start to settle down, waking perhaps once a night. This was great until I started her, at 10 months on bread. She immediately returned to night waking - for no apparent reason- and also had a clear runny nose. I found that the bread had preservative 282 in it so we stopped feeding it to her. Within a couple of nights (I guess it had accumulated in her system) she again settled down to a peaceful nights' sleep! AND her nose cleared up! I can't believe that it could have been that simple!

**[684] One-liners (September 2008)**

- We started our 1-year-old on the elimination diet, and it has been an absolute bliss. He changed from being an irritable, screaming baby, to a content playful little boy. - Jeanette, by email (see full story [651])

**[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*

**[654] 635: Flavour enhancers and a breastfed baby (September 2008)**

Thomas was born a very healthy full term baby. A couple of days later he had little red pimples on his face that after two weeks became quite red and covered a quarter of his cheeks, Clinic nurses noted that it was a bad hormonal rash, but it never went away, it only got worse. Thomas was also an irritable baby needing feeding at least every two hours he didn't sleep for any more than 2 hours at a time.

With two other children and hubby to feed, time was precious, so I started whipping up quick casseroles to feed the family. In the casseroles I would put in meat and fresh veg I had in the fridge, and for the flavour we were used to I would throw in a packet of beef & veg cuppa soup and thicken it with Gravox. Things were going from bad to worse. Thomas was covered all over in a red rash. The doctor diagnosed eczema and gave creams for it but it only got worse and infected.

On one particular occasion I remember vividly, I made the casserole for dinner on Friday night, and while having a cuppa and chat next day noticed that Thomas became quite irritable and his little head came out in beads of sweat, which later became a crusty layer. It suddenly dawned on me that this happened every time I made the casserole, I would eat it about 6 pm and by 12-1 pm the next

day (18 hours later) this little time bomb would go off in Thomas. The next day Thomas was a ratty all day, his whole body was red and his scalp crusty.

When Thomas was 4 months old we got into a Dermatologist who listened to our story and nearly laughed at us and explained about Cuppa soup (flavour enhancers) and Gravox (salicylates) his words were 'it's like a time bomb'. We discovered from that trip that Thomas was allergic to dairy, eggs, peanuts, and probably intolerant to the nasty food colourings, preservatives and additives given his reaction to flavour enhancers and salicylates. Although he had never ingested these foods directly, he had got it all through my breast milk. Thomas was weaned onto Neocate Formula then to soy at 12 months of age. He has since developed allergies to soy, all nuts, potato, gluten, house dust, cats, dogs, horses, many grasses and weed pollen. He also suffers from asthma. He now drinks rice milk and is on a strict egg-free, dairy-free, nut-free, potato-free, gluten-free low salicylate diet. Now at six years of age Thomas is a healthy active boy despite all this.- by email.

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

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

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

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

When he was six months old I convinced my GP that I needed to see the paediatrician. What a disappointment, the paediatrician told me that I was just imagining things as Noah was looking healthy and growing well. He told me to come back when he was a year old if I still thought there was a concern. So the next few months we stayed on that 'homemade elimination diet' of mine, taking everyday as it came. Noah was not interested in playing with his brother (7) or sister, crying most of the days, and sleeping poorly at night. A few weeks before he turned one I decided to talk to

my GP again, tell him I want to see an allergist, because I was more convinced than ever that Noah had some kind of allergy. That was the best thing I could have done. Noah was tested and we found out he is allergic to egg, and the doctor explained to me about food intolerance, which I knew nothing about.

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

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

The writer of the following letter wins our award for persisting despite all the paid 'experts' being against her:

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

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

**Two weeks later ...**

In the two weeks since I first emailed you from sheer desperation, I almost cry every time I think about how my little son's severe gastro problems have so simply and easily disappeared. He slept through the night 48 hrs from our first meal of chicken fried in golden syrup with pasta (the only quick makeshift meal I could make the first night after I emailed you!). His reactions of reflux, pain in tummy, badly burnt bottoms (v. extreme), excessive night waking and festy burps have all disappeared!!!! I have spent the past 13 months in a sleep deprived land (lasting on about 4 random



hours a night on average), with my daughter not getting much quality mum attention and my husband declaring 'no more, this is it re: kids'.

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

I have now seen three dietitians, three paed's and a whole swank of GPs. I could have saved my son months and months of pain and high levels of losec medication. The medical profession has a lot to answer for, not listening to Mum's intuition. We had attended a feeding clinic where they have sessions with a dietitian, speech pathologist, and child health nurse (3 with you and bub) to work out reflux issues. My son had all three problems - still has swallow/coordination problems, and is very very cautious with food textures. So I spent most my time in these clinics (been 3 times already) talking diet - and you know I remembered this morning out of nowhere that the dietitian in these clinics did say something like: 'tomatoes, strawberries, stock - yes they contain salicylates, ahh but you don't need to worry about that. That's too much detail.' I did question her again on it, but I forgot what the 'salicylate' word was at our next visit and ended up sounding stupid. I was nearly there with my list of existing reacting foods but did not have the expertise to link them together. I thought it was acids affecting my son and sugar affecting my husband. Oh well. Move forward. At least I have my husband back again and a gorgeous boy we can all enjoy. :) – Fiona, ACT

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

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

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

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

In the end, I insisted that there was something going on because the times he wasn't crying, I could see that he really had a very social, gentle and loving nature that was at odds with the furious, red screaming insomniac he was the rest of the time! He was breastfed and everything got much worse when I introduced solids. I was advised by a homeopath to stop eating dairy and give him slippery elm powder to help settle his guts. Everything got so much worse after that. The only thing he could have been reacting to in the slippery elm was salicylates so she put me on a low-salicylate diet. Noah improved but I didn't take it fully seriously I was naughty a lot! I continued drinking coffee and some other things like that. Finally, when Noah was 18 months old, I discovered your website. It changed my entire life, and you will never truly know how indebted I am to you for the work you do. – Alison, Qld

#### **[614] Vomiting and hives due to severe amine sensitivity (February 2008)**

Tim was our first child and at the age of 6 months was doing well on breastmilk, formula and Farex. On the advice of the community nurse, we followed the usual recommendations and one of the first group of foods to introduce was potato, banana and avocado. After trialling potato and pumpkin very well, we then tried avocado which he did not like and started to get a rash around his mouth. After a couple of days and not thinking much of it (just teething?) we then tried banana. Within minutes, Tim's rash around the mouth returned and he kept spitting the food out. After a couple of hours when we put him to bed, Tim started to vomit 2-3 episodes, very distressed and turning beetroot colour. He also had swelling and welts around the mouth. We rushed him to the hospital and were later referred to the RPA allergy clinic. Pin-prick tests showed allergy to peanuts, moulds and some others, and we started the elimination diet. Over the next couple of months, we soon discovered he was intolerant to amines, because everytime we tried an amine food eg. paw paw, chocolate, fresh cheese, he would immediately or a couple of hours later, vomit and these hives and welts were visible.

Over the next year, every time I tried Tim on fresh cheese (mild and tasty cheese were completely off the list as Tim would not tolerate these at all), he would fall sick with gastro, vomiting and very distressed. He was still highly intolerant to amine foods. We also had a blood test for banana performed and discovered that he also has a true allergy to this fruit and it was rated as high on the scale.

We visited my parents one day and they had blueberry jam (which Tim can tolerate if it's IXL brand) but the brand was different and one hour after eating it, he vomited.

When he had just turned 3, he came down with pneumonia and was hospitalised for a week. During this time, the nursing staff gave him children's panadol which was orange flavoured. Every time they gave it to him, he would vomit it immediately. Eventually we found that the cherry/vanilla baby panadol was the only one he could tolerate. I also had to speak to the catering staff and give them copies of what foods and cooking processes he could manage. It certainly was

challenging and we did have to bring in our own supply of meals because the hospitals couldn't cope with the particulars (especially the hidden ingredients in foods).

Since then we have always been very particular on the types of food bought, made and at parties because of Tim's reactions. We learnt early to cook our own bread, buy only food without amines, buy fresh white fish and make his own party food to go to places. Many people thought we were going overboard and being too picky but we didn't want Tim to always be sick and we wanted to give him confidence in eating nutritional foods rather than always being wary.

Tim is now five years old and attending full-time school and I am finding it a challenge regarding the availability of foods without additives and spices etc. He loves sausages, but our butcher has admitted that the meat and additives in them aren't perfect. Tim is very tempted in trying new foods that his mates bring to the school and we know there will be times when he will try and not feel so good but we are educating him to the best that parents can. - by email, Qld

**[602] Aching joints began during pregnancy (February 2008)**

I began the elimination diet after reading Fed Up with Asthma [now out of print, the asthma information from this book has been incorporated into the 2008 edition of Fed Up]. I was pregnant with our second child. My first pregnancy was fraught with pain from aching joints, hips especially, from which I'd never suffered before. The pain was very great and continued after childbirth, though not troubling me much, just now and then. My joint movement continued to be impaired. In this pregnancy the pain began in the first trimester, whereas it had begun late in the previous pregnancy. I suffered much sleeplessness and worried how I would last 9 months like this. After 2-3 weeks on the diet (dairy and gluten-free as well) I no longer needed ventolin at all, just one puff daily of my preventer (I'd been using ventolin up to 8 times daily with little effect and 4 puffs of the preventer). Also, no joint pain at all, and the return of a normal range of joint motion. - Elizabeth, by email

**[582] 'Sensitive ears' in an 18-month-old (November 2007)**

My maternal health nurse suggested that I contact you about my 18-month-old son's sensitive ears. They were tested when he was young and were fine. He has started speaking a few words and seems to comprehend things you ask him to do, but when he is around noise he cries his eyes out and needs to be taken away, simple things like singing happy birthday in a group, a group clapping, and sporting venues will bring it on. He also puts his fingers in his ears and blocks them every now and again as if they are annoying him. He eats a lot of organic veg and fruit. [two months later ...] I bought your cookbook and started cutting down on tomatoes, dried fruits and fresh fruit, and I have noticed a huge change. We even took him to the soccer in Melbourne. We've done that before, but it ended in screaming and us leaving! This time he was fantastic, we stayed for the whole game and he loved it. The noise didn't bother him at all. If I feed him spaghetti or anything with lots of tomatoes, he holds his ears and tells me 'ouch, ouch'. - by email, Vic [See hyperacusis symptom discussion]

**[563] IBS: colostomy for 11-month-old baby (May 2007) SHARED COURAGE AWARD STORY FOR MAY 2007 NEWSLETTER**

In reply to the Reader's Story [537] in the last newsletter about salicylate intolerance misdiagnosed as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, our story started 5 years ago. We have fraternal twins who were born at 37 weeks and seemingly healthy at the time, no problems within the pregnancy was diagnosed in

regular scans or when they were born. My first clue, looking back, that twin 2 may not be all right was her failure to use her bowel until day 3. I remember her gagging on day 1 and being told by the nurse that this was common in newborns until they had their first motion.

We then continued on a very long path during her first twenty-one months of life with an unsettled baby. Both twins were breast fed however twin 2 was always unsettled. At 6 months we decided to introduce solids - starting out with farex and progressing to adding small amounts of pureed fruits, ie pear, apple, etc 'all the safe ones'. To our shock twin 2 started to get the most horrible nappy rash with excoriation and bleeding. We couldn't understand it and were regular with her

nappy changes, we also noticed that she would strain whenever she tried to use her bowel. We went to see her Paediatrician who prescribed hydrozole cream and amoxil drops, suggested we try some small amounts of vegetables and sent us on our way.

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

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

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

intolerance) to be the cause of the excoriation and unsettled behaviour; not the case.

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

we have our daughter and we can now give her answers and solutions so that she continues to enjoy good health and happiness. - by email.

**[485] 635: Devondale Extra Soft (January 2006)**

Our 1 year old twin boys started reacting to something they were eating about 2 months ago. It seemed to happen after they had eaten a sandwich. At first we thought it was the food acid in the jam or cream cheese so we eliminated these from their diet. But a couple of days later they had a reaction after eating bread with Devondale Extra Soft butter on it. We looked at the ingredients and came across 635. We had only been using this butter for about 2 months. We have stopped using this butter and will continue to watch out for 635 in other products. The boys' reaction entailed an itchy red and blotchy welt-like rash on their face and a severe and painful nappy rash all over their bottoms and genital area. We hope that this flavour enhancer and the associated reactions become general public knowledge and 635 is banned from use – Katrina from Brisbane, Qld. (Note this product no longer contains 635 after pressure from the Food Intolerance Network).

**[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.

### **[409] One-liners (March 2006)**

- I saw my daughter when she was 14 months old transformed in a few days of failsafe, gluten and dairy free diet from so clingy, always crying and screaming - so tense she was felt stiff - to a smiling happy little girl who played normally.

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

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

### **[366] 282: "My babies woke up 8 times every night" (March 2005)**

A friend gave me your book "Fed up" to read and I simply can't believe the difference it has made to our lives. I have four children. Three of them have been terrible sleepers right from birth. I have spent a week at Tresillian house with my 3rd child, where he was handed back to me at the end of the week unchanged. My babies all woke up on average 8 times every night and I have been so sleep deprived over the past 8 years that I became postnatal. I have a Degree in Early Childhood and have worked as a Director in a Pre-School for many years, and thought that I could control their behaviour by employing techniques acquired through professional training. It was frustrating to find that I couldn't cope. My first child was such a shock! I simply couldn't leave the house with him.

This book came in time for my 4th and final child. My daughter fell into the same terrible broken night sleep pattern as the others. After struggling for 8 months, she did start to settle down, waking perhaps once a night. This was great until I started her, at age 10 months, on bread. She immediately returned to night waking - for no apparent reason - and also had a clear runny nose. I found that the bread she was having had 282 in it. SO we stopped feeding it to her. Within a couple of nights she again settled down to a peaceful nights' sleep! AND her nose cleared up! I can't believe that it could have been that simple!

My question to you regards my children when they were babies, constantly struggling to sleep - could this additive (calcium propionate, 282) have been passed on to the baby through my breastmilk, causing a similar reaction??? [The answer is of course, YES, food chemicals are passed through breastmilk – Sue] – by email

### **[363] Vulnerable new mothers (March 2005)**

Before the diet, my son presented with headaches, itchy skin (in elbows, on legs, usually scratching until it bleeds), black circles under his eyes, "jumpy" behaviour, irritability, day and night pants wetting, pains in the tummy and awful loose bowel motions, blocked ears and sleep apnoea as well as incessant snorting and inability to breathe at night. As a baby he had eczema, colic, could not sleep and fussed with breast milk from 4 months ... somebody needs to support vulnerable new mothers to help their fussy kids, not make it worse by shoving disguised dairy foods (or whatever the

particular issue is) down their throats, and then advise the mother to let them scream it out because they obviously have us fooled with sleeping and behaviour problems! – by email

**[293] 282: Screaming and constant diarrhoea in a baby due to bread preservative (September 2003)**

Right from the minute she was born my daughter Laura was a nightmare. She screamed and screamed and screamed some more. I went around the twist. I had two children under two and it was hard to be up all night with this child and then carry her around all day. The minute I sat her down she would start screaming. I spoke to clinic sisters, doctors, friends and all gave me various degrees of advice. I kept saying that Laura is reacting to my breastmilk but was laughed at and told that that wasn't possible. I now know that I was right and the bread that I was consuming was giving this poor child a huge bellyache.

Life for the first 13 months was, and I won't lie, pure hell. People started treating me like I had PND but it was just this difficult behaviour in the baby. It had not eased with introducing solids and I by now had changed a million poeey nappies. Still everybody told me this was OK

At 13 months, I weaned Laura and she became a little better at sleeping but we still got a poo every nappy and her temperament was a little better. I continued with trying to cope and did the best I could all the while feeling that something was wrong. By 16 months I was getting worried about the nappies as they were causing her terrible pain in nappy rash. As we had moved towns I consulted a new group of clinic sisters and doctors. I had one clinic sister take notice and suggested that I get an appointment with a stomach and bowel doctor. I went to the local GP and was laughed at that this was so extreme and that it was fast transient time of food. This same doctor was consulted again at 18 months and he said that it was toddler diarrhoea. OK. When Laura's new sister was christened when Laura was 20 months we finally discovered what we think is wrong. We went to my husband's family farm and stayed for two and a half weeks. In that time all meals were cooked. No toast, no bread, no sandwiches, no diarrhoea, no nappy rash, sleeping through the night. I went from a child who had 10 runny burning nappies a day to 1 flushable nappy in a matter of days. Laura was cured.

I have since seen the GP who suggested I stay away from bread but gave me no help in finding out why bread was a problem. I went to the clinic sister and asked but to no avail. Then my sister heard about RPA's allergy unit and I was on the phone to them. Wow!!! Within minutes I had my answers. They explained the link between 282 and stomach upsets and runny nappies. They sent me the suggested shopping list and then made me an appointment. I felt like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders and now Laura is going great guns. My little girl is happy and sleeping through the night and has yet to react on her diet (day 25). I am lucky because I only did 10 days on no wheat no dairy and no soy and have already challenged milk and wheat flour. So far so good.

This is Laura's story and I am so lucky but it is infuriating that nobody listened to me. Doctors were quick to dismiss this problem but our food was affecting her and I was giving it to her thinking I was doing well by feeding her healthy bread. Thank goodness for people like you. My son's preschool teacher recently went to Canberra for your talk and made me aware of your books and website. Thank you thank you thank you. We are now having an afternoon tea information session on food at

the preschool and will include all we know about food and the nasties that can be in it. Now we can educate other parents and try and help our community. - Rose, ACT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

**[151] "We were doomed from the start when you look back on it" - Rita's baby (April 2002)**

"We were doomed from the start when you look back on it."

I grew up on the Great Lakes in Canada. My father worked at Allied Chemical (located on the water) for 20 odd years. We ate fish that he caught in the Lakes two or three times a week. I remember tumours being common in these fish in the latter days. I do wonder what effect living in this environment and eating the fish has had on the situation I am presently in.

I used to be a hairstylist, but had to give it up due to reactions to colours, perms, allergy to latex gloves and sensitivity to customers' perfumes. I also have hayfever. My husband has asthma and seasonal allergies and his whole family has asthma.

From birth, our daughter never slept more than 40 minutes at a time, day or night, and by the second week she screamed most of the time. Nobody understood why she wouldn't "just fall asleep" in her pram or her crib or the car. She was seen by a quite a few doctors, midwives and early childcare nurses but no one did much except to label it reflux and say it would correct itself. Tresillian (mother and baby program) gave a different answer every time. Nursing Mothers put me

on a high salicylate diet and told me to feed her around the clock. Needless to say she was totally out of sorts, crying all the time and inconsolable!

Then an early childcare nurse lent me a copy of Fed Up and sent me to a dietitian. I immediately started on the elimination diet. My baby calmed down in the beginning, but it wasn't a cure all. I was to the point of just eating rice, chicken and egg and trying to keep my milk supply up to breastfeed. When my baby started losing weight we went to RPAH and started on Neocate. It took a few weeks to wean her but once she was feeling better she accepted it.

Once she was settled we tried to slowly introduce foods from about 6 or 7 months. Except for a small amount of potato and chicken she reacted terribly to everything. She would wake all through the night screaming, refuse a nap and scream all day, refuse her formula and food in general. She was irritable, had loose bowels several times a day, and would be very aggressive.

I also try to stay away from all chemicals in the house for cleaning. She has had terrible reactions to paint fumes in the early days when I didn't realize how sensitive she was. We were trying to renovate our house, that's on hold for a long while.

I had never heard of this before. Allergies to nuts and things yes, but food intolerance and everything that goes along with it, no - Rita, NSW

#### **[146] Restless babies from tartrazine (yellow 102) (February 2002)**

"Thank you so much for the ["Restless Babies" article](#). I recommended it to a distraught mum in the USA via a breastfeeding support bulletin board. She was shocked to discover that the artificial yellow colour tartrazine (102) was hiding in many 'healthy' foods. Within just two days of changing her diet, her baby had a normal sleeping pattern. Not only that, but her two-year-old 'spirited kid' is much calmer, and has stopped throwing incessant tantrums. Other board members have benefited from the article, including one mum who recognised the frothy 'cappacino' poops mentioned. She had asked her pediatrician about it, but he had no idea what caused it. Changing her diet to exclude tartrazine cured both the frothy poops and the night waking."

Here are the foods that the USA mother was surprised to find tartrazine in: potato bread, yoghurt, canned soup, margarine and cough syrup. She was also eating, and feeding her two year old, cakes/cake mixes/donuts/muffins/snack cakes, ice-cream, cookies and crackers, drink mixes, lemonade, pudding mix, boxed meals, rice and pasta dishes, cheesecake, butterscotch candy, jelly and chips all containing this harmful additive.

#### **[137] Unsettled breastfed baby (December 2001)**

My sister is finding life much easier with her baby thanks to modifying her diet. She removed very high salicylates and amines and it seemed to have an immediate affect on his behaviour. They now have much more settled nights. She found that every time she ate even a small amount of tomato, wine, chocolate etc, that they had a difficult night and that it just wasn't worth it! Thank you for your information and support. It was also very helpful for me as a breastfeeding counsellor to be involved

with a particular case and to see that diet can have an effect. I feel more able to suggest to mothers that this might be something to look into if their baby continues to be unsettled. - reader, Qld

**[121] Baby affected by food chemicals in breastmilk (August 2001)**

I have a 10mth old baby boy who he screamed for the first 3 and half months of his life all day and half of the night until my doc got me onto a dietitian and we tried the elimination diet. Every time I do food tests he reacts by screaming in agony within 24 hours and often gets a nasty red rash on his face and not so severe rash on his back and stomach. Before we tried the diet, we were hospitalised twice because I just couldn't cope. He reacts to most additives but the bread preservative is the worst and he also reacts very badly to amines. - Dani, WA

**[091] New mum with challenging child (October 2000)**

"I am a new mum, my baby is nearly one year old. I am reading your book Fed Up and it is making a huge impact on my life. My daughter was a challenging child in the early part of her life and this created a lot of stress for me and my husband. I felt strongly that the food I was eating upset her through the breast milk. Could this have been why she was so difficult to get to sleep???? We have finished breast feeding and I plan to follow the FAILSAFE diet as much as I can ... Thank you and keep doing what you're doing." - reader, email

**[085] Scared to break the spell (October 2000)**

"I haven't been game to write and tell all about how we are going in case it breaks the spell, but I have had my daughter on a FAILSAFE diet now for 6 weeks, and we have been on a high ever since. We never thought we would ever enjoy our family again, but here we are loving every day with her and everything she does. She has slept through since the 2nd week of the diet. She has gradually lost all signs of her rash, she is happy just pottering around without needing to be constantly nursed or consoled, and she is also beginning to 'trust' food again and eat what is offered to her.

I never thought that this diet would ever get easier, or that I would ever just be able to reach into the cupboard and pull out something to eat, but it is getting more and more second nature ... I have not yet walked down the challenge road, I am a little scared to give up my darling baby who is for the first time in her life receiving the love and the now obviously more comfortable life she deserves. My family and friends have been extremely supportive, and help me watch her like a hawk at any family or social gathering where there is food present. She is also allergic to a few foods and so this is doubly important, especially for peanuts where she may need an adrenaline injection if she consumes anything with peanut in it, this could be as innocent as any chocolate bar or as obvious as a peanut paste sandwich." - discussion group,

**[071] Last night I actually got to sleep six hours (September 2000)**

I am currently reading your book "Fed Up". I have a 3-year-old as well as an 8-month-old whom I'm breast-feeding. Both my children have suffered with severe colic and reflux as well as skin allergies. I have been convinced for a while now that it had something to do with their diet. I did not know where to start in finding out what may be the cause as every doctor that I have been to see just wanted to give me more medication. I have started both my children as well as myself on the

elimination diet. It has been three days now and I am noticing a big change in my 3-year-old's behaviour where she is not depressed when she wakes in the morning. My 8-month-old has stopped vomiting. Last night I actually got to sleep six hours straight without having to see to the baby two or three times ... I would like to seek help from a dietitian who agrees with the elimination diet ... Thank you so much for your book. It makes so much sense to me.

#### **[074] Frequent ear infections (September 2000)**

My son is still clearing his throat but I have noticed that it is getting less and less the longer I have him on the FAILSAFE diet. He does not have too much dairy as I cut that out at a very early stage. From 3 months old he started having really bad ear infections and would sometimes take antibiotics twice a month for it. The doctors then suggested grommets and that's when I went to visit a naturopath who told me to take him off all dairy. Since then we have not had one ear infection. - discussion group

#### **[065] "A difficult baby" - reflux, colic, crying, rash, sleeping problems (September 2000)**

Right from the day she was born, my third child was a difficult baby. The sisters at the hospital commented on day one that she was acting like a day three baby - all unsettled because of the milk coming in and hormonal changes. At 6 weeks she was diagnosed as having reflux and was given suitable medicine, not enough, at 8 weeks she was prescribed a herbal medicine to have in between doses (peppermint base), at 9 weeks she was diagnosed with colic as well and we treated her with all three medications to no avail.

By 12 weeks somebody suggested she will be fine once she starts on some solids (she is obviously just one of those really hungry babies). She cried all the time, she would not go to sleep, she would not stay asleep, and she was only happy if she was being nursed, if you could call it happy. I feasted on my saviours, champagne, burritos, curries (well, Indian babies survive!), and treated myself to a strip of licorice just about every day. I knew she did not like me drinking champagne, but I joked about being in denial about it, thinking I deserved it.

Our new baby had a fine rash covering most of her body, we all thought that makes sense, her big sister has eczema. Her irritability was I thought lactose intolerance maybe, I am slightly lactose intolerant. She had 7 ear infections in 5 months and had grommets put in at 8 months, but I had ear problems, sinus problems, and grommets as a child as well. We went to a sleep clinic to try and get her to learn how to go to sleep, we thought that maybe she did not read the book about how third children are supposed to fit in to our routine and lives. FINALLY after many trips to the doctor and an allergic reaction to an antibiotic, my clever doctor suggested a salicylate-free diet for our baby (not me though because the sensitivity was not really the problem just another thing to try).

Things improved, sleep was achieved when she rolled over on to her stomach, and crying was reduced from 50 minutes of controlled crying to now 20 minutes of controlled crying, every night, every sleep, 4 to 6 times a day. Hell hath no fury like a mother of a child who does not sleep, if baby is woken up. She was still waking up at night like a clock-watcher, and was usually unable to be settled without a breastfeed and then not usually under an hour.

12 months old... still having problems. We have now discovered she is allergic to milk, eggs, bananas, peanuts, Keflex, BBQ spices, and is still on her salicylate free diet (well low salicylate anyway, because it's not really a salicylate intolerance it just makes us feel like we are doing something). She is still waking up at night, but getting better to settle. Some nights she actually sleeps through.

After 12 months ( plus the 5mths I suffered with indigestion during pregnancy) of sleep deprivation, the rot had finally set in and I have succumbed to many illnesses that I could not fight off, so, I gave up breastfeeding.

Well you could knock me down with a feather. The child sleeps. Goes to sleep. The rash disappears. Her first plasticine poo ... 14 months old ... where do we go now? It seems that her new food allergies are becoming more frequent and more aggressive since I stopped breastfeeding.

This brings me to you. I found your book!!! I sat down and started reading your book, not in order, and found her symptoms all over the place. I also found my 8 year old, who scored 3s on eczema, growing pains, restlessness, difficulty falling asleep, night wakings, anxious, vague, concentration, unmotivated, disorganised, easily distracted (she scored a 5 here), moody, irritable, and 2's on fidgety, "jumpy" behaviour. ... What I have benefited most from so far is the relief that I am not crazy, nor the only person in this situation. Thank you for taking the time to write your book.

P.S. Can you tell me if McVities Hobnobs biscuits are okay? The ingredients are: Rolled oats, wholemeal flour, sugar, hydrogenated vegetable oil, vegetable oil, partially inverted sugar syrup, raising agents(sodium bicarbonate, ammonium bicarbonate), salt. [There are probably antioxidants (310-321) in the vegetable oil, so you would have to limit the quantity]. - reader, email

**[060] "I have not enjoyed one bit of those months ..." (July 2000)**

I bought your book, "Fed Up", yesterday. I read half last night, and am very anxious to start the elimination diet. My daughter is 9mths old. I have not enjoyed one bit of those months. Every night is miserable, and days are small catnaps. I was told she had reflux, but I believe that it is the result of something else. Everything I have read in your book has made sense. I intend to start the eating program asap ... I know there is a beautiful child inside ... - reader, email

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

From the minute Daniel was born, he was a very unsettled baby. We went home on day three and I expected he would improve when my milk came in. I work as a midwife, so I had some idea of sleepless nights etc, but nothing had prepared me for a baby who screamed constantly when awake and slept very little. My mum said I had been a very colicky baby and my mother-in-law said my husband David had been an extremely colicky baby - so we presumed Daniel was the same.

After three doses of mastitis, I put Daniel on the bottle at five weeks of age. He was just as unsettled on formula as on breast milk. He continued to have several loose green bowel actions a day. The next day we left for the U.K. - my husband David was transferred over there for what was meant to be five weeks but turned into three months. I think ignorance is bliss, when I look back and see myself taking a screaming six week old baby half way across the world to live in a shoe box hotel room. In the U.K. Daniel continued to be very irritable and unsettled. He posited after every feed and

only very occasionally vomited. The only place he was happy was in the bath, so we bathed him four times a day some days to keep him quiet. When I look back on my diary of this time, he began interrupting his feeds at about 8 weeks of age. A normal night out for tea (we had no cooking facilities in our room) would be David that would walk out on the pavement with a screaming Daniel while I ate and then we would swap. I remember feeling physically sick myself some nights, he would scream so much.

We visited a doctor for Daniel's immunisations and I told her of his constant screaming - she told me it was colic and that it would improve by three months of age. I started him on solids early in case he was hungry (rice cereal and tinned pumpkin) and changed to a formula for hungrier babies. He seemed better for a couple of days but then was just as bad.

When we arrived back in Australia I took Daniel to a local GP, the one I had seen as a child myself. Daniel was screaming and it was 11 am. This doctor gave me a lecture about colic (by this stage Daniel was four months old) and said, "how could there be anything wrong with a child that has such good weight gains?" I tried to explain that it was taking 1-2 hours to feed him a bottle, but he just gave me a lecture on midwives not making any better mothers. He threw a referral at me for a paediatrician on the way out the door (I think only to cover himself).

I tried making an appointment with the paediatrician, but, being Christmas, there were none available for another month. So we continued to battle on and tried Daniel on a soy formula which seemed to help for a while, but then he just went back to square one. He got worse with his feeds, arching his back. We would bang toys on his bottle to distract him. At this stage most nights he was sleeping though and I think that was the only way we survived. He continued to scream and whinge all day and I'm sure he was exhausted at night and that is why he slept. Despite all this he continued to gain weight and reach all his milestones. I lost weight rapidly and was lighter than before falling pregnant. We contemplated that he was just an attention-seeking baby because when we played on the floor, or took him somewhere different, with different toys, he was okay.

The feeding continued to get worse so two and a half months after seeing the GP, when Daniel was six months old I took him to a paediatrician He immediately diagnosed reflux and oesophagitis (inflammation and ulceration of the oesophagus) and started Daniel on Ranitidine (Zantac) which reduced the acid in the stomach, to stop the 'heartburn' type pain. I will never forget what a relief it was to get a diagnosis; little did I know that this was only the start.

Daniel's feeds immediately improved on the Zantac but he continued to be very irritable and whiny between feeds. Three weeks later we started him on Prepulsid (Cisapride) which increases the rate of the stomach emptying, but it didn't seem to make a great deal of difference. We tried him on Nutramigen, in case he was cow's milk intolerant. It seems to help for a couple of weeks, but then he just went back to the old irritable Daniel.

I had become suspicious of a few things in his diet. We went camping over Easter and I gave him a Heinz tomato based baby food - it came out the other end looking nearly same as it went in and Daniel was extremely unsettled all weekend. A booklet from a support group for reflux babies mentioned avoiding acidic foods for reflux babies so we presumed that was the reason it was upsetting him. Luckily, for this reason, we didn't give him Kiwi fruit, oranges or fruit juice.

At eight months of age he was still whingeing all day and throwing huge temper tantrums (head banging the dishwasher) so our paediatrician organised a barium swallow. He also started him on Mylanta four times a day. The first week on Mylanta he was wonderful and that week he had the barium swallow, which was normal, much to my disgust. The next week he was worse than ever. I stopped the Prepulsid at 12 months and started Daniel on cow's milk, which made no difference. At this time I went back to work two days a week and left my mum to cope with Daniel - there was no way a child care centre would have taken him. I think going back to work was the best thing. I would come home after my two days and feel ready to cope with another week of life with Daniel. My mum says she even dreaded him coming for the two days sometimes.

Around this time I tried a naturopath, masseur and chiropractor, but nothing really helped.

By fifteen months of age he was no better. A normal day was leaving him scream to get him to have his afternoon sleep and to settle at night. I would put him in his room several times a day on a bad day and sit for ten minutes and try to calm myself down. Normal daily tasks such as cooking meals and washing were all done while he screamed.

I returned to his paediatrician and he referred us to a gastroenterologist at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. He told us that he doubted Daniel's behaviour was due to reflux (Daniel smiled at him and played with the toys in his room!) He advised I stop the Zantac and organised for him to have a pH study (monitors acid in the oesophagus over 24 hours) and gastroscopy (tube to look at the stomach and oesophagus). After stopping the Zantac, Daniel actually seemed a little better and stopped his head banging.

The pH study showed 'mild' episodes of reflux. His gastroscopy showed moderate to severe inflammation and ulceration of his oesophagus and suggested that there may be an allergy involved. They suggested we see the allergy department at the Royal Children's Hospital. They put Daniel on the Neocate diet. He was only allowed Neocate formula, rice, zucchini, apple, pear and potato. The doctor at the allergy department also advised me that these children get into such bad behavioural problems that once they're fed and changed you just have to leave them scream! The diet was a disaster to say the least - to try to get an 18-month-old to drink this formula, that you gag on yourself it's so foul tasting, was impossible. Daniel screamed all week and was so bad by the end of the week I had to take time off work. He was constipated from only drinking small amounts of water.

In desperation we were referred to a surgeon about the possibility of surgical correction. He wasn't convinced - so he sent us for a gastric emptying study, which was very distressing for Daniel - they put a large dome over his face and stomach. This showed he only refluxed once. The surgeon suggested trying Losec (Omeprazol) which stops acid production in the stomach and helps heal the oesophagus. We started Losec - after about a month we noticed a big difference in his behaviour - he was a much happier little boy and he actually sat and played with toys for short periods of time - something he had never done before.

I was suspicious of food colouring and artificial additives at this stage, as some evenings we described Daniel as 'bouncing off the walls' he was so hyperactive. For this reason we only let him drink plain milk and water and filled him full of 'healthy' fruits, vegetables and cheese!

Like everything else the effect of Losec was wearing off. Daniel was starting to complain of his 'tummy burning' and pointing to his oesophagus. He required constant amusement and was generally a very unhappy little boy. I was finding him nearly impossible to live with and constantly comparing myself to the other mums in playgroup and wondering why they all got so much enjoyment out of their children.

When Daniel was around two and a half years old I happened to go to a seminar through work on food intolerance and allergy run by the team at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. I couldn't believe what I was hearing at the lecture - it was Daniel all over! I immediately sent away for the elimination diet books and got a copy of Friendly Food.

I started off by leaving him on dairy and wheat products. After 1-2 weeks we noticed a difference in his hyperactivity on the diet but he was still having many days of irritability and complaining of his tummy burning. His loose bowel actions were persisting. We stopped dairy products and put him on soy and we started giving him Losec in pear jam instead of yoghurt. He had watery diarrhoea for two weeks after stopping dairy products as a withdrawal effect. Unfortunately what we didn't know was that Losec is not absorbed properly unless given in something acidic like yoghurt. After one month of giving the Losec in pear jam, Daniel's stomach pain was severe.

After being unwell for three days with a high temperature and complaining of shoulder tip pain, Daniel was finally diagnosed at the Royal Children's Hospital with pneumonia from aspirating on his vomit. (I had seen two other doctors who told me children don't know where their pain is and that he had a viral infection.) The pneumonia was in the back of his lung and was pressing on his diaphragm, which was giving him shoulder tip pain. I have never seen Daniel so sick - we thought he was going to die.

Again in desperation we returned to his gastroenterologist who advised another pH study and returning to the surgeon for fundoplication, which kinks the oesophagus to stop food refluxing back from the stomach. He felt he might have a physical problem as well as an intolerance, which caused hyperactivity. So when he was three, Daniel had fundoplication. We stopped the Losec the night before surgery. The surgery was major - four days in hospital and two days on a morphine infusion. As soon as the morphine stopped Daniel started complaining of his stomach burning but now he pointed to his stomach rather than his oesophagus - the surgery had only moved the pain. We recommenced his Losec on leaving hospital. Daniel's weight had dropped from above to below average, as we struggled to maintain his nutrition on vitaminised elimination diet. I hit rock bottom. I was waking at night in a sweat over what I had put him through. I rang the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Clinic in Sydney, beside myself, and they suggested that we bring Daniel up to Sydney. I only wish we had done it prior to the surgery.

At the clinic, his behaviour chart revealed that Daniel was very high for hyperactivity and learning problems and we were told we were dealing with severe food intolerance and ADD. We were advised to try Daniel off pears as he is very salicylate sensitive.

Daniel is now nearly four and in the last month he has been consistently much better. He only tolerates rice, potato, cabbage, beans, chicken, lamb, Nuttalex and restricted amounts of sugar. He is still on Losec which we have increased in the last month to combat his stomach pain. We have



found he is no longer reacting as badly to perfumes since stopping pears and maple syrup. Since stopping rice bubbles his aggressive behaviour have ceased. He will actually sit and play with toys now, although his concentration is poor at times. We have tried him on Ritalin but if he's having a bad day food wise, Ritalin only makes him worse.

The last four years all seem to blur into one big nightmare but I realise I was becoming very bitter about the whole thing. I have resolved to look ahead only. Daniel is really a beautiful little boy underneath all the problems he has had. I try to make the most of the good days and not dwell on the bad days.

It is in the hope of preventing someone else living our nightmare that I do the telephone counselling for D.I.S.A (Distressed Infants Support Association of Vic) and have agreed to be the Melbourne contact for food intolerance in Sue Dengate's book Fed Up. - Jenny

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