

## Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

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("PMT", "PMS", "period", "menstrual", "premenstrual", "pre-menstrual", "menopausal", "peri-menopausal" keywords only)

**[1409] Hot flushes are driving me mad...(September 2016)**

**Update 2 years later:**

Hot flushes are driving me mad especially at night, sometimes keeping me awake at night for a few hours. I saw that your Women's Health factsheet suggests a low fat diet. I find it really hard to be low fat on the failsafe diet. I will make some changes slowly to see if it has an effect on the hot flushes. It would be good to lose some weight too ... after 3 months: I have lost about 8 kilos since going on the low fat diet, clothes are hanging off me. It seems the best way to lose weight is to not try to lose weight! I have been experimenting with ways to change recipes to no fat or low fat and have minimal menopause symptoms. What annoys me is everything you read about how to help menopause never mentions to try a low fat diet. (Other than from you) ... after one year: I have found that my fat intake has a direct effect on my menopause symptoms. If I eat more fat the symptoms creep back. - Rosemaree, [see the full story \[1404\]](#)

**[1265] One-liners (March 2014)**

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

**[1078] Hot flushes gone within days of starting a VLF diet (February 2012)**

I had already been failsafe for about ten years when my menopausal symptoms started - fluctuating breast tenderness followed by symptoms such as restless legs and then hot flushes. As a result of doing the elimination diet with challenges I already knew that I was sensitive to salicylates, amines, additives and A1 dairy foods, so tightening up on failsafe eating dealt with irritability and restless legs, just as it had previously with premenstrual symptoms. But for hot flushes, I found that wasn't enough. I had already noticed that low fat eating (VLF very Low Fat) dealt with period pain and it turned out to be the answer for hot flushes as well - they stopped within days of ditching the fat.

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

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

which was then treated with antibiotics. Unfortunately the nausea remained, and diarrhoea started to become more of a problem.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

smell of perfume and cosmetics affects her. Household chemicals affect her. Some particular irritants:

Hairspray and other spray-on hair products: She feels an urgent need to remove herself from the smell of these products. She feels she can taste them and they cause her a serious headache. We can't go to a normal hairdressing salon - she says they are toxic. We have our hair cut at a home salon and the hairdresser doesn't use any products on us.

Dust: she is aware of dust if it is around and finds it unpleasant because it irritates her nose, but it is not until later that she develops a sinus headache. These headaches can be quite bad and last for many days.

Perfumes/aromatherapy scents: these smells are all really distasteful to her. She feels nauseous and headachy in environments that are scented. She has a strong feeling that she needs to leave.

Garden smells and pollens: she is very aware of them - they make her nose feel sneezy and occasionally she develops a headache.

The smell of clothes washing detergent and other cleaners are most distasteful to Victoria. The skin on her face flushes and feels irritated, and she develops a headache if exposed to the smell for more than a couple of minutes. For washing sheets and pillow cases I often just use a hot water cycle with no detergent and dry them in the sun. They look and smell clean to us. For washing clothes I use the skin care cycle on our machine which uses more water and does an extra rinse, and just use a little OMO Sensitive or Earth Choice Sensitive. Once again, things come out clean, even with less detergent. We can't detect a fragrance after washing and drying in the sun.

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

Victoria notices and dislikes the smell of petrol, cigarette smoke and basically anything else with a strong smell.

Oppressive humid weather gives Victoria (and her grandmother) a sinus headache.

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

One of the many specialists we have taken Victoria to is a paediatric allergist. She took one look at Victoria and commented that she looked like an allergy sufferer. She noticed (amongst other things)

the dark circles under Victoria's eyes and a wrinkle or line across her nose that indicated constant rubbing of her nose. Victoria was tested for a wide range of common allergens, but the skin prick tests did not reveal allergy. The specialist said that she was surprised, and recommended Victoria use a saline nasal spray (which she does) and use antihistamines when needed as she may be allergic to things other than what she was tested for.

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

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

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

Victoria is gifted. She was accelerated a whole grade in primary school and excels academically. I nearly choked on my tea when I read in one of your books that we 'should not blame bad behaviour on giftedness' - I had been blaming her prickliness, impatience and irritability with others on giftedness to some degree.

We have very recently discovered that Victoria's blood levels of Vitamin D are in the normal range (55), but only barely. Our dietitian (from the failsafe list) says that in her opinion the bare minimum should be 75 and we should be aiming for 100. She says that recent overseas research indicates that there is a link between intolerances and low vitamin D levels. We are trying to get Victoria into the sun for safe periods every day to improve this, and will test again in 3 months ...

Update 3 months later: We have actually been faring better over the last month or so. We had a re-test for vitamin D levels and to our surprise discovered that despite trying to increase sun-exposure, Victoria's levels were still at the low-normal level of 55 (normal range is 50-300). Our dietitian had suggested previously that we should aim for higher than 100. So I decided to try a failsafe vitamin D capsule. I don't know if that has helped, or it is just a co-incidence, but after a couple of weeks Victoria seems to be back to faring quite well on the low-chemical diet. I am cautiously optimistic.

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

#### **[874] Sick and tired of asthma – now have so much energy (November 2009)**

I have been failsafe for over 4 years now and my life has changed dramatically because of it. Before I tried the diet I was constantly unwell with chronic sinus and hayfever, period problems, varied stomach problems and lethargy. The worst thing was the asthma - it was getting so bad I couldn't read a book to my children or talk on the phone for very long. Every day was a struggle to get through.

I have found out that I am intolerant to gluten, salicylates, amines, preservative etc. Since starting the diet, I haven't had asthma medication for over 4 years - it is wonderful to be able to breathe.

Other things the diet helped me with are: changing a constant huge amount of phlegm to a small amount; getting rid of my permanent blocked nose; no more constant colds and infections (sinus and chest); changed daily headaches to rare ones; improved PMT and periods a large amount; got rid of my constant indigestion and reflux; removed the permanent frown from my face and changed it to a smile!!

I now have lots of energy and do Boxercise classes which I would never have been able to manage before. Going up a hill on my daily walk is no longer a problem. It is great to have so much energy.

I want to thank you so much for your book, it has changed my life. I just wish doctors would tell you about trying different diets to help asthma - I could have done with knowing years ago! – Rosemaree, SA (first provided in 2005 then updated as above)

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

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

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

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

was no immediate reaction. About a week or two later, the headaches came back with a vengeance and lasted for about a month. (Incidentally, I have always had different and worse headaches with my periods. While Failsafe, the period headaches were minor to insignificant.)

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

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

#### **[780] Amenorrhoea (June 2009)**

My almost 15 year old daughter who has had monthly cramps but no period for 4 years suddenly got her period. We have been on the elimination diet for 3 weeks. Is this a coincidence? - **See replies [535], [536] below**

#### **[789] Failsafe plus low fat for peri-menopausal symptoms (June 2009)**

I am a woman in my mid 40s and have been failsafe for 5 years or more. I notice I am starting to have a little more insomnia, and irritability, and some other symptoms which I attribute to peri-menopause. Thank you so much for your extra information about low fat diets for menopausal symptoms. It really makes sense. I know when I indulge in a big steak with potatoes, lots of butter and whole milk I get extreme breast tenderness the next day and feel warm all over. I will keep you posted, but I really think this could greatly help some of my symptoms. 6 months later: Thank you for your information regarding menopause, it seems to be working - by email, U.S.

### **[729] Period pain completely went away (June 2009)**

I have always suspected my period pain in the past was due to me eating all sorts of additives and high natural food chemicals. Since eating failsafe with my boys I NEVER get period pain anymore, however still very heavy periods. We need to keep in mind I had three children, which in itself can help, but the pain did return after my third (not as bad as previously) and then completely went away when I went failsafe (haven't had pain for about six years now – no PMT either!!!). - by email

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Physical symptoms: abdominal pains (thought I might have IBS) • acne • asthma & wheezing, tightness of chest • athlete's foot • bad breath • bloating (lost three dress sizes when I gave up the salts) • blurred vision • breast pain • constipation • crawling/burning sensation on skin • diarrhea • insomnia • itching • joint pain, stiffness & swelling • fatigue & lethargy (thought I might have CFS) •

menstrual problems, pre-menstrual pain • metallic taste • migraines • mouth ulcers • muscles - aching, weakness, tremors & cramps nausea palpitations & racing pulse • poor balance • rashes • difficulty in swallowing • dizziness • eczema • excessive thirst • feeling drained • flushes - both hot & cold • frequent need to urinate • headaches • restless legs • sensitivity to light & noise • sleep disturbances • sore, itching, puffy, burning eyes, stiff neck • temperature fluctuations • ringing ears • weight problems.

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

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

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

Two years ago all my symptoms started again and six months ago I figured out why. I had gone back to work and was relying on prepackaged food a lot more where I always used make my own, and as a result my whole family suffered. My then six year old had all sorts of trouble emotionally and my then two year old turned into a monster. My husband was diagnosed with irritable bowel and I had all my former problems including depression. Now thanks to a friend who recommended failsafe I am pleased to say we are now back on track and I can safely say that it is all down to food. We tried, through trial and error, all different sorts of treatments to help all our ailments, but simply changing our diet has helped us all. - by email

#### **[535] PMS, period pain and diet 2 (January 2007)**

I read in the newsletter that you were interested in reports about improvement in PMT and infertility and the diet. Prior to failsafe I was having irregular cycles, really really bad irritability for almost two weeks prior to my period and bleeding which sometimes lasted for three weeks for each cycle. I had sore breasts from about day 17 of each cycle, sometimes they were so bad I couldn't hug my little boy without being in pain. Since being on the diet I no longer have sore breasts prior to my period. I only have very mild irritability about a day or two prior to my period and I am having 27 day cycles every month with bleeding only lasting about 5 or 6 days and no clotting. Also, my period pain has lessened a great deal too.

I have been trying for 2 and a half years to conceive and I'm now hoping I will be able to get pregnant if I stay on the diet. It took 13 months to become pregnant with my first child. My PMS seemed to become worse after I had my son. – by email

### **[376] One liners (July 2005)**

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

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

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

Straight after my son's birth I knew something was wrong. When I got home I just sat in bed staring into space. I couldn't get out of bed, couldn't do anything, couldn't sleep. I would start panicking when I heard the baby cry. My mother had to come and look after us, doing all the work and bringing my son to me for feeds. It was awful. I didn't want to take antidepressants but it was something I had to do to make myself better.

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

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

### **[120] PMT (August 2001)**

The biggest thing in my life is that my PMT has gone. I am amazed. I have had this problem for so many years. It was ruling my life and threatening my marriage to the point where earlier this year I started taking Lovan (another name for Prozac) to help me with it. I know you said that PMT disappears on the diet but I must admit mine was so bad I really didn't believe you. Anyway, my PMT has completely gone. I am convinced about this diet now! - NT

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