

Reader reports from the Food Intolerance Network

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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD

("OCD" keyword only) ([search here](#) for "obsessive" and "compulsive" if needed)

[1591] Obsessive-compulsive disorder OCD and diet? (edited facebook thread) (January 2021)

Has anyone here 'cured' OCD and severe eating related anxiety/preferences using the failsafe diet? Asking for a friend's 5 year old who is really suffering 🤔. At the moment he eats a gluten bread with propionates, dairy cheese, a gluten brioche with preservatives, orange juice. He won't eat anything else. I think he accepted water the other day as a sub but she tried GF bread and that was not acceptable. Wouldn't even touch it. Really tough situation - Emma

Yes. Immediately. Cut out food dyes and processed foods. Immediately a different child. Found out it also helped my migraines and lead me here and autoimmune diet. But it was hard and a lot of trial and error - Kay

My little boy displayed some **strange OCD type behaviours** before FS and all went away within a short time of beginning the diet - Maria

Yup. Honestly, it turned out that all of the foods I had childhood anxiety around, I'm severely reactive to - Becky

Have they looked into pans/pandas? - Elendel (Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) is a clinical diagnosis given to children who have a dramatic - sometimes overnight - onset of neuropsychiatric symptoms including obsessions/compulsions or food restriction. Said to affect 1:200 children. <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/service/pans-pandas/what-are-pans-pandas>

Yes and am finding out the hard way what happens when a 10 year old, (usually gluten free and simple failsafe) has some Tim Tam treats as a school holiday treat – Rose

I've found out with 'messy monkeys' ... a "healthy" breakfast cereal gifted to my boys for Christmas – Fi

My son had motor and vocal tics that went away with the diet changes – Cath (see [Factsheet on tics and Tourette symptoms](#))

Anxiety/OCD could be related to something entirely different that is just manifesting itself in food issues as it is a means of 'controlling' something in the little ones life. A good psychologist or counsellor might be beneficial. I know of a little one who has anxiety around food cos she was told to chew her food slowly as she might choke and then the next night her brother almost did choke. So now she takes forever to eat. So, as I said, it depends on the issue at hand – Ruth

[1620] Eating disorder behaviours – facebook thread (September 2021)

Q: Has anyone found that the elimination diet has triggered eating disorder behaviours that weren't present before? - Terri



It can trigger orthorexia in some people, which is sort of like considering all the foods that are bad for you, as being inherently toxic to *everyone* and not just, bad for yourself - Belinda

Unfortunately going on any sort of diet is a risk factor for developing an eating disorder – Sara

I have done the failsafe diet for both my husband and our son (one in, all in) and I am a recovering anorexic (last hospitalisation was over 20 years ago). I found that I had to start seeing my psychologist again when we first started the failsafe diet 3 years ago. Together we came up with strategies to overcome the feeling of restricting food intake etc which was extremely helpful – Kath

Yes. But on a lighter note....any diet that allows me to eat chips and jersey caramels is going to cause issues! - Annie

It was partially responsible for **triggering OCD** for me (but trauma played a big part too) because realizing I react to things like wrong cooking method or food kept a bit too long or contamination from other foods was something my brain grabbed hold of and ran with 🤪 - Rene

I am the opposite. I never liked eating as I often felt unwell after eating. Now, I can eat without feeling sick so I actually eat more & enjoy eating - Sharyn

Yes, to the point I made myself really sick from malnutrition. I was already struggling with medicine-related poor appetite before failsafe. Around week 3 it all went downhill as I preferred starving to the idea of eating the stage one food options again. It took months for anyone to realise how little I was eating. It is still very early in the recovery stages where it is a huge achievement if I manage one meal and a snack two days in a row - Becky

Yes, but my dietician was aware that this happened a bit last time I did a gut healing course. We agreed that I had to do all the steps properly and transition off properly and check in often and have a food diary and write honestly so that if I wasn't eating enough or focusing on things too much he would steer me away from that. I have been better than last time but I want to get off this diet because while it's been helpful I know mentally I need to more food options again soon – Megan

Yes, this diet made me utterly bonkers! I was obsessive to the point of throwing food away if it was cooked a minute too long. Would be wonderful if there was a support group for this – Anne

We always recommend a supportive and experienced dietitian to supervise the RPAH protocol, particularly if there are food disorder issues. Elimination and challenge is a diagnostic protocol, not a lifestyle, and it is important to liberalise diet to your limits. Ask for RPAH's liberalising advice confoodnet@ozemail.com.au

See more in our excellent [factsheet on eating disorders](#) with scientific references

[1607] Danielle's story - 'every day felt like groundhog day' COURAGE AWARD (July 2021)

I stumbled upon your website, at the time with my eldest 2 kids behaviour, every day felt like groundhog day. I was a mess, at my wits' end and barely surviving, not to mention the toll it was taking my relationship with my husband.

When we started our failsafe journey in 2019, our 4 year-old was the worst of the 3 kids with:

* hyperactivity * no impulse control * didn't like loud noises * defiance* **OCD** * hard to get to sleep * phases of night wakings * sensory issues * mood swings * extremely fussy eater * anxiety * autistic traits (salicylates and amines) * no volume control * strips off his clothes (salicylates) * aggressive behavior * constantly running away.

It was at the point where we didn't want to go out as a family, play dates or dinner because we had to keep our eye on him 24/7 as he would run off and we couldn't find him. He would across roads and car parks without looking if there were traffic coming and we have had a couple of really close calls that got my heart beating out of my chest. Even in a play cafe he would head straight to the fire exit... when the alarm went off he would continue to run off through the carpark away from the play cafe staff like it was a game! It was just too stressful and we would get home physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted from it.

I got to the point where I was too scared to take the 3 kids even to a playground in fear he would go missing, or while I'm tending to him something would happen with the other two kids. I was frustrated, tired and the anxiety was overwhelming that we mostly just stayed home or we would have to have the 4 year-old strapped in the double pram with the 2 year-old and the looks or comments I would get having an older kid strapped in a pram was gave me anxiety so I stopped giving eye contact to others or pretending I didn't notice them talking to me to avoid having to awkwardly respond.

But even when we stayed home the fighting between the kids was full on, the aggression and yelling was horrendous. The 4 year-old would do things like drag the 6 year-old down the hall way by her hair and the even got into a fight while I my husband was making lunch which ended up in the 6 year-old going to hospital to have her head glued as the 4 year-old pulled her by the hair in a rage and smashed her head into the corner of a cupboard. It didn't finish there either, the 6 year-old got into a fight with the 4 year-old and sent his head through the glass of his bedroom window, it couldn't keep going on or one of them would be badly injured!

The first I'd ever heard of food chemicals was an Early Childhood Educator at the local Occasional care because she approached me one day in 2019 as she could see I was desperate and she suggested we look into diet to start with. We went dairy and gluten free to begin with (we were already dairy free as all 3 kids have never tolerated dairy since birth) big improvements with going gluten free and stopped most of the lack of impulse control including running away from us and some defiance but there was a pieces missing, so she suggested we look into salicylates and possibly

amines only because her child had the same issue and picked up on the same behaviour issues but because I didn't know much about them I dismissed it for the time being thinking it was mainly gluten that was the issue.

Our 6 year-old was the same but slightly different where these behaviour traits would be suppressed at kindy or school and unleashed at home:

*hyperactive * extremely aggressive towards 4 year-old * no volume control * has to be making a noise all the time * fighting with sibling constantly * **OCD** * extreme defiance * frequent night wakings * screaming/shouting * trouble getting to sleep * mood swings it felt like we were dealing with a teenager not a 6 year-old * extremely over emotional like crying for no apparent reason.

She already had food intolerances, since a newborn with dairy and even with that eliminated through my breast milk she has never been a good sleeper, always frequently waking. It progressed at the age of 2 where we noticed that she was having night terrors and I started to realise it was when she ate strawberries that day, the night terrors still randomly happened.

My husband thought I was crazy with the strawberry theory and I was 'looking' for an intolerance that wasn't there... until the day he discovered carrot and apple was also setting her night terrors off. As she approached 4 she was able to tell us it felt like ants crawling up her nose and that's why she woke screaming and she also could breathe through her nose, so we made a food diary and found other fruits contributing to the problem.

Countless doctors looked at us puzzled, one day a different doctor put it down to allergic rhinitis and prescribed a nasal steroid and told us to use kids zyrtec as it was only spring and summer it would happen. This worked initially then stopped working and progressed through winter too so we went to an ENT who ruled out tonsils/adenoids and confirmed allergic rhinitis. We also found a link: her extreme emotional outbursts were a result of yeast extract (MSG) like vegemite and it lasted for 3 days before it wore off.

We were tired, exhausted and severely sleep deprived from waking constantly from the night terrors and I would try absolutely anything at this point, I was scrolling through facebook one day and found an article on histamine intolerance and thought 'that's exactly what happens to my child!' So in September 2020 we started limited histamine triggering foods and the nose itching and night terrors decreased so we didn't need to use the zyrtec or steroids as much.

So I then started looking at multiple websites for something dietwise that could help not just our 4 year-old but also help the 6 year-old's self diagnosed histamine intolerance but there was so much mixed information on the internet I just wanted to cry. It just broke me and I wondered how on earth I could actually do this at all! I typed in 'fed up with hyperactivity' in frustration and there was..... The Fed up website and it has changed our life for the better and helped us in so many ways, I am forever grateful for being able to find all the info that covers the histamine intolerance too.

Our 6 year-old was still having gluten but when COVID-19 hit Australia and we were forced to home school it was easier for the whole family to go completely gluten free instead of making several meals when there was barely anything left at the shops.... and would you believe it, our missing piece for her histamine intolerance was gluten!! We haven't used nasal steroids or zyrtec since going gluten free and have discovered my husband's seasonal hayfever (I think its histamine intolerance too!) is triggered by gluten also, so I know if either of them have had gluten as their noses play up and the 6 year-olds 'night terrors' and itchy nose/congestion occur for 3 days following gluten.

The 4 year-old's sensitivities are dairy, gluten, salicylates (including inhaled), amines, any artificial/natural colours, preservatives, antioxidants and artificial flavours. The 6 year-old is much the same as our 4 year-old but instead of amines she is sensitive to glutamates.

Basically in a nutshell all of the behaviours even the autistic and sensory traits disappeared around week 3 of the failsafe diet it was such a transformation - we got to see these two completely different kids for who they really are not who the food turned them into!

Doing this diet as a family has also uncovered my own sensitivities as I get a migraines when I eat dairy or smell fragrances/ chemicals and I know why now! Our 2 year-old hasn't had any issues prior to the failsafe diet but does seem to sleep better than before so we will continue to do the diet as a family because it's honestly changed us all for the better and we are eating so much healthier with cleaner eating without all the additives!

It was really hard at first changing our diet, I've cried many tears and thought a thousand times it's easier to give up on the failsafe diet and just deal with the behaviour but after the 4 year-old had 2 weeks of antibiotics to clear up 2 infections I realised that the diet had made a huge difference and didn't want to go back to how it originally was EVER!

So we haven't looked back since and now we have got our heads wrapped around recipes that work for our family it has become so much easier! Thank you again Sue and Howard for all the work you have done and time you have put into the website for people like myself that don't know where to turn next – Danielle

[1446] Diet cures 5 years of chronic back pain ... and joint pain, anger outbursts, depression (June 2017)

I originally found your web site searching for a relationship between my anger outbursts and my food consumption and found it also got rid of my 24/7, five year, day-in day-out chronic back pain. I also had ongoing knee and wrist pain from years earlier that I had put down to being overweight as the pain started when the weight did and no xrays or ultrasounds found any issues.

In June 2010, I injured my lower back, it got better, then I would do some gardening or cut my toe nails, or spend too much time in the kitchen (I like to cook), and it would set it off again. After two years of pain /no pain, pain /no pain it stayed for five years. Every second, day and night. I'm not fussed on pharmaceuticals available to me as they either didn't work or I was a zombie, so I just put up with it. I bought a tens machine, table inverter, saw an osteopath, medicine man, two pain clinics, acupuncture ... nothing helped for more than an hour or two.

In September 2016 I started ridding my diet of preservatives and numbers as I did some research on anger and food as I didn't want to have to take the "don't kill people tonic" (black cohosh, chaste tree etc) for the rest of my life. I trialled this abstinence for six weeks as recommended, I wasn't 100% off everything but probably around 80-90%. I went overseas for a couple of weeks which blew the diet then resumed the diet after Christmas realising that the anger crept in the more the preservatives did. I also noticed that the less numbers and preservatives I consumed the less back, knee and wrist pain I suffered. The more high preservative, high number foods I consumed the back, knee and wrist pain would kick in.

I already bought bread, toothpaste, wine and juice without numbers or preservatives and a year earlier had stopped buying baked beans, tinned spaghetti, sauces, soy and almond milk and changed

my brand of peanut butter all because the ingredients in these pre-packaged delights had too much sugar/oil/salt. I didn't realise preservatives and/or numbers were also in vegemite, crumpets, dried fruit, large volumes of oil like the type restaurants, takeaway shops and packaged food businesses (crisps, popcorn etc) use, cheese, dips, soda, jam, cordial, gherkins, artichoke hearts, beetroot (the last three pickled or tinned), biscuits, grapes, crackers, tacos, cakes, gravy as well as processed meat and prawns. I can't believe the list goes on forever, other than the last two items these were things I ate, daily. Most thankfully I've found have alternatives for within other brands or other shops like health food stores for dried fruit or the Italian fruit shop for pickled vegies.

The damage within my back still exists as it kicks in hard with every period or too much party food. Chronic pain could all be resolved with a lack of acceptable poison.

Here are some recent examples....

* My husband & I went to trivia last Thursday night and to make it on time we needed to eat at the pub. The only vegan item on the menu (yes, I'm also vegan) I had eaten at the other pub they run on Tuesday, felt a bit of back pain on Wednesday and so have crossed that meal off the list as preservative free. Instead, I ate a large bag of crisps for dinner (I hadn't bought crisps at home for two weeks to avoid them as I was eating a small amount almost every day...), took me two hours to consume but my back and knee pain was excruciating on Friday. You see, my brain can't comprehend this, but it will eventually as Saturday, my back was a tad stiff but no pain and no pain in my knees.

* During my chronic pain I needed to do stretches and exercises every morning otherwise my entire back would stiffen up, if I missed four consecutive days I could barely walk. In the last two weeks I've not exercised or stretched four days straight, twice, and all without pain and minimal stiffness.

* Today I prepped food and cleaned up the kitchen for two hours, before I could just manage 30 minutes without needing to sit on a chair.

A lack of preservatives and numbers/additives in my consumption has also has greatly reduced/rid my **recently developed OCD** of locking my car multiple times and my depression that I've had since my late teens.

My injury is still with me as the damage has been done, but I can't feel it unless I consume something silly. As is my anger, negativity, depression etc but it seems so far away I can scarcely feel it, it is no longer a highlight in my day.

I didn't figure people wouldn't believe me as everyone believed I had the pain I endured.

I was suicidal for the last 5 years coming to grips with the fact that this is as good as it gets and I'm only 40, how bad will this pain be when I'm 80. Not just my back pain, knee pain, chest pain, wrist pain, but can I stand to live with this pain for another 40 years. I changed careers because of it in my forties. Specialists have been telling me to lower my stress levels or lose weight or pace activities. I do all these things for months and no change. I stop consuming preservatives and after a couple of months I cannot feel the pain even if I look for it. And no one cares, no one believes me, maybe because I can't get my head around it either but that doesn't mean it's not true. Both pain clinics I've been a patient at over the last few year just ignored me. I really appreciate that you have a place to share with the world the horrors of the food industry. – Alison

[1439] "Thank you for changing my life" - US teen (May 2017) COURAGE AWARD

Wow! I cannot believe I'm finally taking the time to write this email that I have been thinking about writing for nearly a year and a half (I am 15 now). I cannot even express to you in words how you have changed my life...

Before doing this diet, throughout childhood I have experienced a range of symptoms of food intolerance (ODD, **OCD**, depression and anxiety) but these were not bad enough to be classified as disorders. I had no idea that they could have a link to food.

I have also had IBS symptoms, feelings of panic/nervousness, irrational fears, inability to focus on thoughts at times, headaches, nauseousness, hyperactivity, reflux, 'weird' behavior (thought to be associated with ADHD), stomach aches and pains, food cravings and more. After doing the Diet and cutting out salicylates, amines and additives I already began to notice a WORLD of a difference. It was AMAZING!! When I started the diet in full (also cutting out dairy foods, wheat, grains and soy) the results were UNBELIEVABLE!!! My symptoms greatly reduced and (some even disappeared completely)!!!

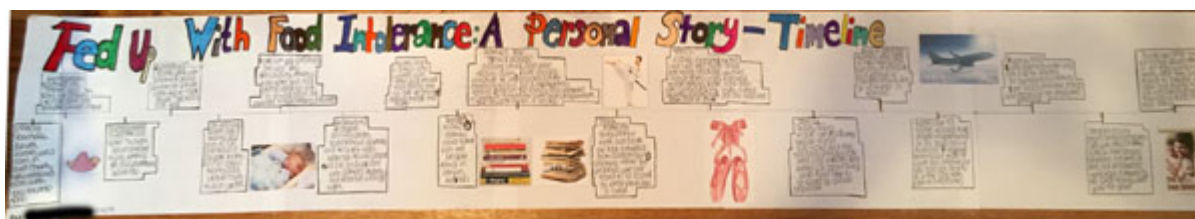
Further, I was diagnosed with ADHD as well. Although some of it is really ADHD (and I am medicated for it) I have found a large part of it (and behaviors associated with it) to be greatly influenced through diet!

When I first found the diet, I decided to do it, but take a break for the summer. I planned to begin it after I came back from sleep away camp that summer. I went to camp and ate EVERYTHING; I told myself nothing was off limits. I ate tons of high salicylate fruits and LOTS of artificial junk (candy, cake, lots of artificial preservatives, etc.) as well as lots of amines, dairy, some wheat and soy (all of which I now know I am sensitive to). Because of this, I developed an eating disorder, extreme anxiety, depression and worsened ADHD and stomach problems. I was under-weight and recommended to an Eating Disorder Clinic later on. I was so miserable; yet I remembered this diet... I decided to start it up again. So that fall, I started eating less and less of the high chemical foods I had been eating and more Failsafe foods. As I slowly cut out the foods I was sensitive, my body was starting to heal! The eating disorder, depression, anxiety, obsessive thoughts and awful stomach aches and pains went away!!! It was amazing!!!!

Now I have been sticking to mainly Failsafe foods (low salicylate, but a less strict approach to amines). I still avoid additives and glutamates though; as well as dairy foods, wheat, soy and grains.

Also, read your ebook "Fed Up With Food Intolerance: A Personal Story". It was moving and I like it very much. I liked it so much that I did "Character Summaries" and a "Character Chart" for some of the characters. I also recently finished creating a "Timeline" of events in the story and I did it just because.

What's more, you have INSPIRED me. Food intolerance is a HUGE passion of mine that I now know about (because of your site) and I want to help others and impact their lives the way you have. This information has touched me in a deep way – Teenager (15, USA)



[\(Click to view large version\)](#)

[1413] Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diet success for my child which also “saved my life” (November 2016)

I saw one of your excellent dietitians for myself, then realised her office was placed with providers for children with ASD. I didn't choose her because of my / my child's ASD, but because of my being ill for many years. The dietitian proved very calm, had a good understanding of ASD, was easygoing as well as knowledgeable and assertive.

With regards to the diet, I can't commend everyone highly enough for all their work. From the information provided on the Fedup website to the Facebook Failsafe group – everyone is helping out to improve knowledge in this area.

Through this diet, my ASD child, appears more and more balanced. Our highly qualified psychologist took one look at my child in the waiting room at her last appointment (a month into the diet) and said “This is a completely different child. What on earth have you been doing to achieve this?” (The achievement being a calm, responsive and fearless child.)

I “failed” (made a mistake) with the diet whilst travelling and gave my child McDonald fries and it hurt me to see her in such emotional turmoil as a result of the food. Within half an hour of the fries, my child completely reverted to her **old OCD mannerisms** and state of confusion. She forced me to line up behind her at a flight of stairs, and demanded I march up and down them, following her commands. She screamed at me when I wouldn't conform or march correctly. She even screamed at my brother for “smiling at her”. Through Failsafe, I can control her behaviour and emotions (and mine) and seeing her happier, more balanced and less frustrated is nothing short of a miracle.

Also, her night terrors, which used to be horrific and last over 30 minutes of her guttural screaming and trying to hurt me and ending in vomiting all over me, haven't happened since the diet was started. She still has little nightmares and tosses and turns a bit but that's not the same as safely putting her on the floor and crying seeing her so distressed and unable to be comforted.

My ASD child will never be “neurotypical” and I shouldn't try to make her “like others” who don't have autism. In fact, now the **OCD**, ODD and anger has lessened with the diet, I'm actually proud she's autistic as she's super funny, quirky and clever – never a dull moment. What I was trying to say was she doesn't stand out as ASD as there are less full blown meltdowns that make us the centre of attention in public spaces. She's gone over a month without scratching me intentionally in the face, whereas it used to occur every second day. If it does occur, it's when she's had one of the nasty numbers or amines.

For me, I have spent 10 plus years in and out of doctors, holistic practitioners, and have undergone over a thousand dollars' worth of testing and examinations. Until Failsafe, I have had a permanent headache, brain fog, sinus problems, dizziness and angry outbursts (from amines). Through Failsafe,

my headache / food hangover that took place EVERY DAY...all gone within a month. Truly life changing. I can now run again (my passion) and do yoga without procrastinating for fear of my bones aching, making it impossible to remain still and be present. I have lost 7 kgs and am the lightest I have been since I was in my 20s, BUT I am eating well and healthily. Being able to exercise, and not feel so sick has meant my depression is not as severe and I am able to focus on what's going on around me rather than sit in my own food induced pain and anger. I am also diagnosed autistic and the wrong foods cause my shutdowns and meltdowns to worsen, so it's not always a social emotional reaction, but a reaction to food that has me feeling so unwell and foggy that I have to shut the door to the outside world. Instead, thanks to Failsafe, it is really nice to feel more connected through all my senses. Lights aren't so bright, sound is not so loud, and my partner can touch me on the arm more without me jumping a mile.

With salicylate reduction – I can empty my bladder!!! I used to get up at least six times a night (and that's not counting the six times I would go before falling sleep). I woke two hourly because of the nerve ending feeling of not being able to empty completely. When I went low sals, I woke once a night. And my restless legs (which I didn't realise I had...until this diet) reduced dramatically. Sleeping is SO MUCH BETTER. I actually didn't realise it could be normal to sleep five hours' straight. For most of my life I've woken two hourly and it has been completely broken. Same goes for my ASD child. Now we wake once a night.

Failsafe saved my life – Anonymous, Qld.

[1341] Ursula's story: "I will write to every health professional ... to get food intolerance recognised as a diagnosis" (July 2015)

After nearly 4 years of significant sleep problems with my son, we now describe both our children as very good sleepers, and this is entirely due to diet. My son is also doing extremely well in school, again entirely thanks to dietary changes.

Like you, we did the rounds of GPs, paediatricians, psychologists, social workers, OTs and child health nurses, and all the interventions and treatments helped a little, but nothing led to any significant improvement. Not once was diet mentioned beyond 'does he eat well?'

We had a long appointment with a paediatric sleep specialist who went through our entire lifestyle and bedtime routine with us, before apologetically telling us that we were doing all the right things, and that he didn't know what else he could suggest. He made no reference to diet.

Having seen the extreme improvement in sleep following dietary intervention with my son I was very keen to write and tell him, because I think he genuinely wanted to help us and couldn't, and I could hardly believe that he had no knowledge of the significant impact diet can have on sleep.

On further consideration, I decided that I would write to every health professional we had consulted with, because time and time again we were met with utter bewilderment. My son's behaviour looked a bit like **OCD**, ADHD, ADD, ASD, ODD and sensory processing disorder, but it didn't quite fit the diagnosis, and the treatments were ineffective. If only food intolerance had been on someone's list of differential diagnoses!

I posed the question on the facebook forum a while back, 'how did people come to the realisation that diet was the issue?' For most it was random chance, a friend of a friend had a child who had

improved hugely from diet, or a class teacher had mentioned something. This is not how the diagnosis should be made.

I am attaching an example/suggested format for a letter that could be sent to health professionals (see below).

I will be writing to every health professional I have encountered in an attempt to both assist them in helping others, and to get food intolerance widely recognised as a diagnosis. - Ursula, by email

....

Dear Dr <name of doctor>

Re: <Name of child> DOB: <date of birth>

You may remember that we consulted with you around six months ago regarding our son John. John has had a history of sleep problems since birth, including taking 2-3 hours to settle to sleep, night terrors, insomnia and excessive movement during sleep. At that time you were unable to offer us any advice or treatment regarding these problems, which had remained unresolved despite behavioural intervention, careful attention to night time routine, and consistent age-appropriate bedtimes.

Following our consultation, we stumbled across the idea that sleep problems can be linked to food, even some foods which are normally perceived as healthy. We have now been working with an accredited dietician for four months following the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) Elimination diet. I am very pleased to report that as a result of this intervention we no longer consider John to have any sleep problems whatsoever. He now settles calmly to sleep within 15-30minutes, sleeps through the night, waking only very occasionally, maybe once every six weeks or so. He also no longer suffers with night terrors.

I wanted to write and tell you about our experience in the hope that this information might benefit some of your other patients in future. You can find more information about the RPAH elimination diet on their website: <http://allergy.net.au>, and also from the Food Intolerance Network: <http://fedup.com.au> which is a voluntary organisation promoting the RPAH work and providing evidence-based information regarding food intolerance.

I hope this information is of use to you, for us, it has been life-changing.

Yours sincerely,

<your signature>

...

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

Thats it! I'm convinced!....For the past 11 months my children have not been able to eat in the same room, let alone next to each other at the table without some kind of temper tantrum explosion, because my youngest (miss 8) has what I can only describe as some kind of anxiety attack over the noise her sister (miss 10) makes when eating anything. A couple of months ago my mum saw Sue

Dengate on the TV talking about salicylates and how they can affect children and when she showed me all I kept thinking was...."That's her...that's what she's like." It wasn't only the eating thing but any tantrum she threw was extreme. Only at home though, my parents and husband were the only ones to see the full extent of it for a very long time. I looked into the failsafe diet and had been experimenting with things until I received my failsafe book recently. I was cutting back or cutting out salicylates where I knew they were, and had good results. Keeping a food diary I was able to link explosive tantrums which lasted for days to foods that I hadn't considered for one reason or another. So I began being a little more strict with it, recently cutting out preservatives where I could as well, (we haven't done the strict elimination diet). A few days ago she had a massive melt down, followed by something that surprised me....she was unable to make a decision, just a simple one.....but as there was no logic in her head that told her how to do it, she looked at me blankly and said "I can't decide". She's a very bright girl so it was very surprising to see it, I think it was something I'd not noticed previously as it was hidden by tantrums when she couldn't decide something. Tonight, after not having preservatives and only having very little salicylates for about a week, she came to me and said "mum....Em was sitting this far away from me (showing me a few cm's with her fingers) and she was eating popcorn, and I didn't even hear her!!!" She was so excited and proud of herself, and once she left the room I burst into tears of happiness. She's been amazingly accepting of this diet, I've not kept it secret from her, and I believe she understands how its helping her and all of us. Thank you Sue Dengate, you've changed our lives thanks also to my family for being so supportive - Kristy

The irritation to noise is called auditory sensory processing disorder (ASPD). We have also found that my son who suffered terribly from it can show no signs of it when managed with diet. It always creeps back whenever there is the smallest of slipups. Two days ago when he accidentally consumed corn he was an emotional wreck on the couch covering his ears crying and begging me to turn the vacuum cleaner off. Today his reaction was over. I vacuumed in the same room and he had no problem at all - Emma

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 sals are mostly out but realised we weren't meant to be having avocado! Think it's time to fine tune the sals! -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

Amines also, especially chocolate, for auditory processing disorder here - Adelle

My daughter has sensory/sound and **OCD issues** which are definitely magnified by eating a high salicylate diet. Great to you found it too and now know why she behaved that way - Jan

Thank you for your post. I thought this was not due to food but a part of the ASD, as our doctor & speech pathologist said! - Louisa

See also [factsheet on hyperacusis](#) (sensitivity to sound)

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

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

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

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

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

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

[1116] My eating disorder (Bulimia 1-5 times a day and Binge Eating every day) has stopped (July 2012)

I am 23. I led a high achieving, healthy active lifestyle until about 6 years ago when Bulimia slowly introduced itself into my normal, happy life, I nearly lost my scholarship and it ruined my VCE which I was unable to complete and was continued by many months of incredible ups and downs.

It then progressed to Severe Bulimia, Binge Eating Disorder, Anorexia, hospitalisation and long stays in inpatient facilities for people with similar issues. Everything seemed like a temporary fix, a week after finishing programs I was back to my old habits.

About 18 months ago, with my barely manageable eating disorder, I moved by myself to a new town ... I needed a new start, fresh faces and thought a change of scenery would help and it did :) I met my current partner after the first month of being here and he's been nothing but supportive of all my issues. To look at and meet me I'm you're average bubbly, blue eyed, blonde hair, healthy looking girl and I think it was quite a shock when he first he learned what the "other me" was like.

After 6 months however things started to go downhill with my health - my asthma, hay fever and eczema went crazy - which had only ever happened occasionally over my life (but never all at the same time) as I've had them all since I was a baby.

What really bothered me was a rash on my face that I had never experienced before - swollen lips, eyelids, dark red blotches underneath my skin, which turned to swelling, my skin flaking off and incredible itchiness!! As my self-esteem wasn't that great anyway, this was a huge blow. I quit work, uni, and it ruined my social life.

I thought it may have been the natural environment around me, new town, new plants, pollens etc as it was sometimes accompanied by sneezing. My crazy eating habits were another likely culprit.

I went to the Doctor, he gave me some steroids which cleared it up but kept coming back. Then turned to allergy testing, cutting out certain foods through a nutritionist , gluten, all the usuals etc. Useless. Used all natural makeups, moisturizers, cleansers etc. Useless again

I've always known that preservatives aren't good for us, always eaten well in the past and thought of myself as fairly educated about food (that might sound strange when someone has an Eating Disorder but it's very common) but because additives had never been a problem in the past it never occurred to me that they could be the cause.

I found your website by chance whilst researching the issue on the net and along with your website's helpful info, photos and testimonials I knew I had found what I was looking for. I started cutting out the 600 number flavour enhancers and the 200 number preservatives (I wasn't aware that dried fruit could be so delicious but deathly for my skin!! I'd always make sure there was no added sugar but that's all I worried about) ... Anyway, instant recovery ... now I'm trying to cut out the rest of the nasties too - in both foods and makeup.

We have always eaten loads of fruit and veg and always go organic when we can afford to but it's hard trying to buy food that both my boyfriend and I will be happy with as he's an eating machine who's affected by nothing and never puts on weight ;) We're getting used to it ... we're happier.

I myself have SO much more energy it's unbelievable, I'm sure it neurologically changes something in your head. My eating disorder - it was currently Bulimia 1-5 times a day and Binge Eating everyday - has been completely stopped.

It's been nearly 2 months - I feel so free. Where it used to be constant, I now rarely have **my crazy OCD thoughts** filling my head with foods, food info or body image. I know it's only early days but I'm optimistic and am going to try my absolute hardest ... I honestly haven't felt this good in years.

I've never seen any information about the links between food additives and Eating disorders - I definitely intend to research this further.

Thank you so much for being a revolutionary voice and caring enough to share your knowledge with the rest of the world. You have seriously changed my life and inspired me to take action. - Jayne, by email

[1009] ADHD: Denied enrolment at 2 schools (March 2011) COURAGE AWARD

I just wanted thank you!!! My 9 year old son has ADHD, ODD, **OCD**, anxiety and a learning disability. He was denied enrolment at 2 schools because they feared his ADHD would disrupt other children. He was constantly in trouble at school and has been suspended. He was frustrated and upset every morning and every night, at times he couldn't sit at the dinner table without crying from the stress he felt, he found it very difficult to cope from day to day. From when he was a very young age, my husband and I worked very hard at managing his problems and saw numerous specialists. Originally we took him off bread with preservatives when he was 2 years old. It wasn't until we were at our wits' end a year ago, with schools and counsellors telling us to 'medicate him' - that I decided to buy your book.

A year on, our son avoids salicylates and additives and I have to say I have had a recent comment from a friend who hasn't seen him for a year and she said 'we were so impressed with your son's politeness, his impeccable table manners, you two have done so well with him!, even my sister commented on what a lovely boy he is!'

We managed to get him into a new school, one that I believed would work with us to 'manage' his issues better. Then his new school teacher rang me to say 'I have had a beautiful week with your son, he is very respectful, very caring towards the other children, has lovely manners and we haven't had one episode of hyperactivity or disruptive behaviour, he has a lot to offer and is doing very well'

I have near cried with pure relief and excitement that the little boy I got glimpses off occasionally over the last 9 years is now that nice little boy all day EVERY DAY! and other people can see it.

As a parent who had tried everything to avoid medication, I finally feel we have found the answer to successfully managing a child with behavioural issues. I now tell people – Failsafe, Structure, Management, and above all: Understanding. Your book is gold to us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. – Leonie, NSW

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