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Resources on Food Additives, Salicylates, Amines, and Salicylates

There are two premier organizations that offer information on removing additives from one's diet. These organizations also recommend a trial of removing certain naturally occurring food chemicals from the diets of children and adults with behavioral or learning problems, to determine whether these chemicals are also influencing the individual's behavior.

I'll start this section by describing the organizations' work on additives.

A. Food additives: The Feingold Organization

Feingold.org offers information on the connection between **additives** and learning difficulties, as well as other health problems such as headaches, rashes, bedwetting, tantrums, and asthma. The site provides abstracts and comments on relevant research studies,, and gives links to the full text of key articles, where available.

Feingold.org also publishes a yearly food list in a large spiral bound book. This book lists the brand and product names of grocery store and restaurant foods that are clear of food additives. The Feingold organization does not rely on the labels themselves in creating this list, because labels are sometimes inaccurate. Instead, volunteers, who have seen the benefit of the Feingold diet in their own lives and the lives of their families, laboriously compile these lists by writing to each company regarding each food item, and repeating this process every year. I

f the company does not reply to the query, its products do not appear on this list. If a restaurant chain offers so few additive-free items that it would be impossible to get a decent meal there, the restaurant does not appear on the list. Products containing high-fructose corn syrup are identified but not eliminated from these lists.

Moreover, membership provides instant e-mail emergency updates on this information. For example, I recently received an email alerting me that a manufacturer had switched from synthetic D2 to natural D3 (normally a good step) in a product, but that the D3 supplier preserved the D3 with BHT. The preservative did not need to appear on the label because the preservative is an ingredient of an ingredient.

Similarly, changes are sometimes made in a product but the manufacturer continues to use the old labels until they are used up. Again, the e-mail alerts subscribers of these changes. Sometimes Feingold is alerted to the presence of new additives by the negative reactions of consumers to a product that was formerly "safe" for them. In these cases Feingold will investigate the complained-of product.

If you wish to remove additives from your child's diet but are not ready to cook from scratch, **I recommend that you join the Feingold organization in order to get these lists.** Food labels are not entirely accurate and food ingredients are constantly changing. Membership is currently $65 per year. Membership also includes a monthly newsletter. Members can confer by phone and email with volunteers in the organization to discuss fine-tuning the diet and eliminating other chemical exposures that may be causing problems.

B. **Food Additives: the Food Intolerance Network.**

The other helpful food-additives organization is the Australia-based **Food Intolerance Network.** The site is **Fedupwithfoodadditives.info** This organization offers information on the dangers of **food additives** and a free bimonthly e-newsletter. The site also offers a free download of recipes (many of these are high in sugar, white flour, and rancid vegetable oils, but you can make adjustments). The site offers many inspiring testimonials from parents on the benefits from complying with the diet; these are fascinating and very encouraging to those trying to implement these diets. The organization does not offer comprehensive product lists as Feingold does, perhaps because Australian labels are more trustworthy.

C. Food Chemicals: Salicylates

Both organizations recommend trial periods that eliminate naturally occurring food chemicals, for persons with behavioral or learning problems that do not fully respond to an additive-free diet. The trial period helps you to

evaluate whether the chemicals are affecting you or your child. You may be unaware of the affects of these chemicals because the foods are consumed daily.

The Feingold association recommends a trial period that eliminates **naturally occurring salicylates** from the child's diet if the child has learning or behavioral problems. The association describes a three-stage plan for first eliminating the salicylates, and then gradually reintroducing them to determine the child's threshold for tolerance of salicylates. This plan and the explanation are very useful.

However, Feingold's list of salicylates-containing foods to avoid is incomplete, because the organization focuses on removing **the key foods** that have proven problematic for many children, instead of seeking to remove or reduce **all salicylate-containing foods.** For a more complete list that would cover the very sensitive child, I suggest instead the list at **http://failsafediet.wordpress.com/**

A streamlined introduction to salicylate sensitivity, plus food lists and recipes, appears at **salicylatesensitivity.com/info.** Also available on this site is a list of food additives, household products, and drugs that contain salicylates**. Caution:** the low-salicylate recipes are not amine-free.

D. Food Chemicals: Amines and the "Failsafe Diet"

The **Failsafe diet** is a version of a diet promulgated by the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Allergy Clinic in Australia and popularized by Sue Dengate, creator of the **Food Intolerance Network.** ("Failsafe" is Sue Dengate's acronym for **f**ree of **a**dd**i**tives, **l**ow in **s**alicylates, **a**mines and **f**lavour **e**nhancers.)

The Failsafe diet complements the Feingold association's recommended low-salicylate diet. Both Dengate and the Prince Alfred Hospital recognize Dr. Feingold as the originator of the idea of removing these chemicals from the diets of children with problems. However, the Failsafe diet is stricter than the Feingold diet, in that some **salicylate-containing foods** that are allowed on the Feingold diet are excluded on the Failsafe diet, and in that the **Failsafe diet also restricts naturally occurring amines.**

Amines (in this context) are the breakdown products of proteins. Amines are created naturally in some vegetables and fruits as they ripen, such as banans. Amines are also created naturally by food preparation processes including sprouting, fermenting, and cooking at high temperatures or at low temperatures for long periods of time. Examples of foods that undergo these processes include alfalfa sprouts and sprouted grain flours; sourdough breads, sauerkraut, and yogurt, kefir, and cultured buttermilk; and meats broiled or simmered in a crock-pot.

Lists of these foods are available at **http://failsafediet.wordpress.com** and more information on amines is available at the Food Intolerance website, at **http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/factsheets/Factamines.htm.**

Also available from Fed Up With Food Additives are books and a DVD created by the website's founder Sue Dengate***: Fed Up*** (which is both a book and a DVD) , and ***The Failsafe Cookbook***. I heartily recommend all three resources, for their information about additives, salicylates and amines and their multifarious effects on children's behavior, and for their suggestions on implementing the Failsafe diet.

The website also offers a free e-newsletter and a downloadable booklet containing recipes and brief food lists. The recipes are high in sugar and white flour. The booklet is available here: http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info/extras/Failsafebooklet.pdf.

The newsletter is free on the Fed up with Food additives website, because the site is financed by the income from Sue Dengate's books and DVD's. The Feingold list and newsletter are not free, because the organization is funded entirely by membership fees.

Lists of amine-containing foods can also be found at **http://failsafediet.wordpress.com/**

A good explanation of how to avoid creating amines via cooking techniques (plus a wealth of other information) is at http://www.eklhad.net/adhd/manage-amines.html#brain. The author also has a blog covering several years of dietary work with his children—frustrating reading, because the children did not maintain their diets at school and on weekends, which may account for their limited progress on the various diets he tried.

E. Food Chemicals: Oxalates

Oxalates are crystals that may form in the body upon the ingestion of foods high in oxalic acid, such as spinach and soy. The crystals are needle-sharp, and can cause kidney stones as well as unexplained pain in any soft tissue, such as the muscles, eyes, and heart. Oxalate pain in the eyes is now believed to be the reason that some children with autism poke their eyes out. The solutions to oxalate sensitivity include avoidance of high-oxalate vegetables and fruits and increased mineral supplements both to prevent oxalate formation and to facilitate oxalate removal from the body.

The Vulvar Pain Foundation describes the oxalate problem in terms of vulvodynia, which is excruciating pain in the vulvar area. Oxalate crystals often cause vulvodynia. The group's website has many scientific articles on oxalates and offers a good low-oxalate cookbook for sale**. http://www.vulvarpainfoundation.org/**

Oxalate problems in children with l**earning problems or autism** have been investigated only within the past few years. Sources of information include the following:

Developmentalspectrums.com has a brief article by Susan Owens, who began the research of the effects of oxalates in kids with autism.

Lowoxalate.info has the most thorough information, including synopses of medical studies, and the most complete food list.

A great article on oxalates explaining the biochemistry and recommended supplements was written by **Will Shaw, PhD.** Dr. Shaw is an organic chemist and founder of the Great Plains Laboratory, one of the major testing labs used to help children on the autism spectrum. See the article at
http://www.greatplainslaboratory.com/home/eng/oxalates.asp