

Why Can't My Child Behave?

PART ONE

Tell Me About Your Child

- Does your child get upset too easily?
- Does she seem to not hear what you are saying?
- Is his motor stuck on fast forward?
- After you have carefully explained why he cannot do something, and he seems to understand, do you turn your back only to have him repeat the behavior?
- Do you sense that she really can't help the way she behaves?
- Do all the teachers in the school know your child's name?
- Do other children avoid playing with your child?
- Does she have difficulty interacting with children her age?
- Does he always seem to be touching every person and object in his reach?
- Is she fine one minute, and out of control the next?
- Do all the games have to be played his way, with his rules?
- Does she seem to be off in her own little world?
- Can he go from here to there and lose something?
- Is homework lost, forgotten, or mutilated on a regular basis?
- Does he have a hard time understanding subtle cues, like facial expressions?
- Does she laugh too loud, or inappropriately?
- Is he really just like other kids, only much more so?

This is a sampling of some of the symptoms that can be triggered by exposure to chemicals in one's food or environment.

Looking for Answers

When you first time realize that Dr. Spock wasn't writing about your new baby, you are likely to seek someone who can help you.

If you're lucky, it will be someone who will at least lend a sympathetic ear. For most moms, unfortunately, their queries will bring blame, not sympathy. Your baby doesn't sleep? Doesn't coo? Doesn't smile and gurgle? What are YOU doing wrong? Eventually, you stop asking and stay home more than you would like, growing more certain each day that you must be the only mother in the world who is having these problems. Chances are you live a just block away from another mom who is saying the same thing to herself.

If you're especially unfortunate, you will be on the receiving end of blame from those who are supposed to be on your side, including your doctor, relatives, and perhaps even your husband.

I knew a lot about parenting before the birth of my first child, Laura. All the books I read gave roughly the same advice: provide lots of support, security, and love; notice the child when he is being good; offer positive rewards; have few rules but be consistent in upholding them; modify behavior through "natural and logical consequences;" nurture the child without pressuring him to fit your image. These are good ideas. No, actually, they're excellent ideas that generally work -- but not for the chemically sensitive child. Techniques that were successful with most of the children I had taught rolled off my daughter as though she was coated with Teflon. Laura was bright and precocious, possessing a great vocabulary and normal hearing, but my attempts to communicate with her were like reasoning with a rock. When I tried to make eye contact, her glances darted all over the room. When I asked her a question, her response -- at those times when she responded at all -- was very good, but had no relation to the question I had asked. At times I felt as though I had fallen down a rabbit hole and now lived in Wonderland.

Of all the sadness such a child brings into your life, I think the worst is that it's so hard to like them. It isn't hard to love them; that's part of the job description. But what saddened me most of all was that I found it so difficult to *like* this little girl I had wanted so much.

Laura was not always distracted and difficult. There were times when she was fine. When she was impossible, I never knew what I had done wrong, and when she was good, it was equally puzzling what I had done right! The only pattern that emerged was that she behaved better when she was sick. A bout with chicken pox produced an uncomfortable but

Why Can't My Child Behave?

calm and normal child. It never occurred to me that she wasn't eating much when she was sick. I let her choose what she wanted to eat and for about three days her diet was primarily 7UP and granola. It was much later that I understood that she is chemically sensitive, and that food additives were affecting her behavior.

Wishful thinking

Every new step a child takes is viewed hopefully by the parent of a chemically sensitive youngster. "She's *bound* to do better once she gets into school." "Now that he's five, he's sure to settle down." Parents search for the magical solution: a new school or day care, a new neighborhood, new therapist, new doctor, new activity, new parenting course. The list goes on and parents add to their disappointment collection. Some of these changes may be of help, but if the problem rests within the child, the symptoms follow him wherever he goes, and any improvement is still short of the mark.

Your search for answers may have taken you down many roads. Depending on whom you consult, you may have received support or blame. Parents of a chemically sensitive child rarely find what they really need: a professional who is aware of *all* the possible factors that could be triggering the child's difficulties, who will be able to select a method of treatment that is just right for your individual child, and who can recommend the best resource.

Instead, the advice parents receive usually depends much more upon the training of the advisor than on the child's symptoms. This was brought out at a major conference, "Defined Diets and Childhood Hyperactivity" (sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, 1982). There is little reason to believe things have changed since that time. If you take your child to a psychologist he will focus on the psychological aspect of the problem; visit a pediatrician who favors diet and he will refer you to the Feingold Association; see one who favors drugs and he will give you a prescription; an allergist will suggest allergy testing. What parents rarely see is that *they* are actually the ones making the diagnosis when they choose which professional to consult. In the long run, the choice is yours, and this is probably best since nobody knows your child as well as you.

Am I a bad parent?

We take years developing our self-esteem, and by the time we have it in pretty good shape, feeling we are up to almost any challenge, we welcome our little darling into the world. Suddenly, seven pounds of humanity can undo it all.

I've never met you, but I know you are a good parent. Bad parents don't care; they don't read books on children's behavior, don't agonize

Why Can't My Child Behave?

over their child's problems, and don't go to the ends of the earth in search of answers.

It's easy to be a "good parent" when your baby sleeps, coos, and smiles, or when your toddler draws admiring glances from strangers. The test of a parent's ability comes from adversity, not from an obedient offspring. You may not feel lucky, but your child is. He will need all the patience and determination you can muster, and when you have turned things around and he fits in with the other children, your neighbors may not understand how hard you worked and how impressive your accomplishment. Your child probably won't understand how much of his success is due to your efforts, but you'll know, and that will be enough.

A century ago, the parents of hyperactive children would have been judged unfortunate; today they are likely to be judged guilty. When my daughter was two months old, the father of an obedient little boy -- who slept on command -- told me I needed to "train her to sleep." She's 29 years old now, and I still haven't figured out what he meant.

For the first four and a half years of my daughter's life, I questioned what was wrong with my parenting. I asked advice from virtually everyone who knew Laura, but they didn't know what to suggest. Then I decided that two well-meaning people, doing their best for four and a half years, couldn't have made *that* many mistakes. Maybe the problem lay with my daughter; maybe there was something wrong with her "chemistry," although I had no idea what that meant.

Is something wrong with my child?

Every parent's worst fear is verified when they see their child behaving in ways they know are abnormal.

By this time I was ready to accept the possibility that my child might not be normal, and even the heavy-duty labels -- emotionally disturbed, or whatever -- would have been a relief of sorts. At least it would have explained things. But there were many times when Laura behaved very normally, and she was clearly precocious: speaking early, teaching herself to read, and sounding out new words by age three-and-a-half. And I could not accept that a child could be emotionally disturbed on just Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

If the year had been 1994 instead of 1974, she probably would have been given the label of "attention deficit disorder." I would have been told that my daughter had a chemical abnormality in her brain, and that it was essential she be given stimulant drugs -- which I would have gladly done. (I would not have considered questioning my doctor.) But in 1974 there was no name for such a child. The closest term was "hyperactive," but that seemed unlikely when I lived with the slowest moving little girl this side of the Mississippi.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

“Why Your Child is Hyperactive” - but mine wasn't

Many moms are silent about their agony. Not me. I complained about Laura's difficult behavior to anyone who would listen. When one friend, who had listened to a lot, handed me a copy of the book, *Why Your Child is Hyperactive*, by Ben F. Feingold, M.D., I read it -- not because I thought it applied to my child, but because I didn't want to seem unappreciative.

The book was very interesting, and some of the information was amazing, but I never recognized Laura's symptoms. My husband, Harry, read it and saw traits he had shown as a child. He also suspected that food additives could be triggering his dreadful headaches, so he began to pay more attention to what he ate.

Dr. Feingold's book describes the work that began with an adult patient's severe case of hives. After considering all the options, he prescribed a diet eliminating aspirin and other substances that contain a chemical similar to acetylsalicylic acid (the name for aspirin). Not only did the hives clear up, but the woman's behavior changed from belligerent to normal as long as she avoided certain foods and food additives. At that time, Feingold identified synthetic food dyes, artificial flavorings, and a group of foods -- primarily common fruits -- as likely offenders. A few years later he would add the antioxidant preservatives BHA, BHT and then TBHQ to the list of no-nos.

When Harry was able to identify food additives as the cause of his terrible migraine headaches it was a profound relief for us both. These headaches had started out slowly, and had gradually increased in frequency and severity until reaching the point where he was sick several times a month. At these times, all he could do was lie in a dark room for the three days or so that the attack lasted. He went from doctor to doctor in search of help, but each new doctor simply asked what pain pills he was taking, and handed him a prescription for more. Nobody ever questioned why he got the headaches in the first place.

As the headache-free time lengthened, Harry was able to identify other culprits, and he soon added MSG (monosodium glutamate) and sodium benzoate to the list.

Dabbling with this diet

I sort of used Dr. Feingold's diet with Laura, but the thought of tossing out “perfectly good” food went against the grain. I figured if I followed the diet 50%, I should see a 50% improvement.

There was no noticeable improvement, but that was fine with me. With an impossible five-year-old, a baby, plus a husband who was still sick some of the time, I didn't want to be The Happy Homemaker in some frilly white apron, cooking from scratch.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Then one day when Harry came home from work, he told me about the lunch he had eaten. When he selected a cottage cheese salad, he knew to discard the bright red cherry, but a little bit of juice from the cherry had colored the cottage cheese pink in one spot. It was just a drop or two, and he figured such a little bit wouldn't hurt, so he ate all of it. About two hours later he could feel the start of a migraine. The pain pills were strong enough to stop the headache, but it made a profound impression on him that such a tiny amount of dye could be so potent.

It made a tremendous impression on me as well. A drop or two! The next day when my daughter came downstairs for breakfast, I was careful to give her only food I believed was "pure." She had some scrambled eggs, bread and butter, and a glass of milk. I did my best with the other meals, keeping things plain and free of obvious synthetic additives.

The following morning Laura's behavior surprised and delighted me. Instead of her attention being in the next county, she was right there, hearing and responding to me. Her eyes didn't dart all over the room, but connected with mine, and her responses were reasonable. She made sense! She behaved normally, and I was amazed. Previously, when I saw normal behavior I didn't know why. Now I had something to go on.

I would later learn that this rapid 24-hour turn-around is very unusual, and that three days to three weeks is the typical response time. I don't know if our quick success was due to good fortune, or if her little body was so delighted to get real food in place of the junk that occupied our pantry that it went into fast forward!

The relief and euphoria were wonderful. We finally understood what had been going on -- and going wrong -- for more than five years. We had not been "additive-free" for more than a few days when the first infraction came our way. It was a warm spring day, and Laura was playing outside. As she passed the window I noticed she was chewing gum. Disaster alert! There could be only one source: our next door neighbor's daughter had a gum ball machine. They had been away when we began the diet, and I was not aware they had returned home, so I hadn't told them about our discovery.

Predictably, in about two hours, Laura's personality transformed from that of a child to a miniature monster. She was enraged at everything/nothing, and appeared to have a severe emotional disturbance. Our efforts to calm her went unheeded, and after it had grown dark outside, she ran out the door, shouting back that she was running away from home. (She didn't run far, fortunately.) By the following day, the effects had mostly worn off, and we resumed our new, rational lifestyle. I made a point to speak with my neighbor, and cautioned her to not give Laura *anything* edible. I doubt she really understood, but she was

Why Can't My Child Behave?

cooperative. That episode took place in 1975, but I have never forgotten the potential damage from one single colored gumball. I would later learn that we were exceptionally lucky. Most children would experience a three-day reaction to the same chemicals; for some unfortunate few, the reaction time could last even longer.

The Ages and Stages of ADD/ADHD

The chemically sensitive infant cries too much and sleeps too little.

He may not want to be held or cuddled, stiffening his little body in response to the affection you offer. Nothing pleases him. This little person dominates your family's life. He screams with the volume turned up to the maximum, stops taking naps long before Dr. Spock predicted, and is difficult to get to sleep at night. He seems to need less sleep than you do!

Your chemically sensitive baby may seem to have difficulty tolerating certain foods, even breast milk, and may be prone to rashes. Perhaps you had advanced notice that your baby would be a handful. Some display overactive behavior even before birth.

Carol Ann

"During the late stages of pregnancy," her dad writes, "this child was active! Sometimes in the evening our entertainment would be to watch her mother's abdomen as the baby went through a series of movements that would be the envy of most gymnasts. At times the movements were so violent that my wife would nearly be thrown out of bed."

Baby blues

Many people are aware of the connection between food additives and childhood hyperactivity, and some understand that behavioral disorders can persist into adulthood. But it is generally not recognized that food additives can produce a wide range of symptoms in people of all ages.

Perhaps the head banging, crib rocking, sleepless, screaming infant attracts less attention than the hyperactive child does because he disrupts the lives of fewer people. Furthermore, it's easy to diagnose the cause as "nervous mother." A woman who has not had a restful night's sleep in several weeks would indeed be nervous.

The previously wonderful baby becomes a terror of a toddler

The contented baby may change dramatically after he begins to eat table food, take vitamins, or discover junk food.

"Mark was such a cheerful little baby until he was about six months old and I introduced solid food. We moved at this time, and I assumed his

Why Can't My Child Behave?

radical change in behavior was the result of the move. I never suspected it was triggered by the foods and baby vitamins he ingested.

“His record for sleep was 3 hours. A day with my son alternated between loudness, constant motion, and short periods of sleep -- generally one or two hours. By age one he slept through the night, but woke screaming. This was his only form of communication except for one word: ‘see.’ When we got a puppy, Mark learned to imitate it. Looking back, it’s funny to recall that my son spoke two words, one of which was ‘woof.’ But at the time, my husband and I didn’t laugh at that, or at much of anything else, for that matter. I was with this miserably unhappy baby for 24 hours each day. Who would want to baby-sit? There were times when I thought I was cracking up, and I even daydreamed of being institutionalized -- somewhere restful and quiet!

“The few other adults I encountered weren’t much help. ‘You’re spoiling him.’ ‘He certainly knows how to get his way.’ Why was I made to feel so guilty? I turned to my doctor for help and received a sarcastic, ‘If he’s this bad at two, we’ll refer you to a psychiatrist.’

“When Mark was one and a half he got a terrible case of diarrhea. (I didn’t realize at the time that it was caused by cow’s milk.) This went on for three months, and all the medications my doctor tried were of no help. Another doctor in the group told me to put Mark on a very restricted diet, with only three foods. Gradually the diarrhea stopped, but most astonishing was the dramatic change in Mark’s behavior. Gone was the child who behaved as though he was possessed, and my sweet little boy was back. (‘See, he outgrew it,’ explained a relative.)

“On the Feingold diet, my two-year-old’s vocabulary of one word and a bark suddenly became a torrent of words and even some short sentences. Within a week he was naming all of the letters of the alphabet.”

Starting school

A tot who can manage fairly well at home may find school to be more than she can handle.

“The day she was born, the nurse warned me she was hyperactive,” Lita’s mother recalls. “But she was such a bright, lovable baby that we didn’t even realize she was hyperactive until she started the Feingold diet at age 4.

“Lita didn’t play with toys, didn’t watch TV, couldn’t sit at the table for a meal, and seldom slept for more than 30 minutes at a time -- even at night. But she was sweet, and I guess we just got accustomed to the level of activity.

“Developmentally, she was slow in most areas, but because she spoke in full sentences by the age of 18 months, we didn’t consider the possibility of retardation.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

She had done well at home and on a one-to-one basis with other children, but nursery school brought more frustration than this three-year-old could handle, so we began the search for answers.

“We followed the Feingold Diet to the best of our ability for a week, and then on Saturday I gave her a glass of H----- Punch. It made me think of a dog chasing its own tail. She chased around in circles, with no place to go; her reaction was so extreme we became fully committed to the diet that day.”

Kindergarten and thence . . . or, learning to hate school

Typically, the chemically sensitive child is bright and eager to begin school. Kindergarten may be O.K., but the showdown generally comes in first grade.

Your six-year-old approaches first grade with enthusiasm and energy - too much energy. Still, you hope this experience will be different; maybe the school can offer your child something you were not able to provide.

Now that your child is expected to sit still, listen to directions, stand in line, and finish his work, the problems become too obvious to ignore. He is doing his best but his best isn't good enough; he isn't able to keep up with the class. He begins to hear phrases that will follow him from grade to grade. Typically the child is told, “You're such a bright little boy; you could do it if you really tried.” He really is trying, but he still isn't able to meet the expectation for his grade. (If he were in a wheelchair, nobody would say, “If you really tried, you could walk.” But when a child is experiencing a chemical reaction, the cause is seldom understood.)

Many mothers (and some fathers) sense that their child really is unable to control his own body, but to outsiders, “all that kid needs is a good spanking.” For many children, first grade is the beginning of the ego-shredding experience that will eventually turn them off to school and everything associated with it.

Even more crippling than a child's difficulty with schoolwork are his awkward social skills. He is often clumsy in his interactions with other children. He bumps into them, or pushes his chair into their desks, interrupts, misses the point of a story, laughs too loud or at the wrong time, and doesn't understand how close is too close, or where his space ends and the next person's begins. Social skills deficits are rarely addressed in school, but they a greater handicap for the child than a D on his report card. The socially awkward child is likely to grow up to be a socially awkward adult.

Chemically sensitive children often have difficulty in the use of either fine muscles or gross muscles. They may write poorly, or be the last to be chosen for a team. In either case, it is one more arena of failure for them.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Well-meaning advice . . .

or, When What You're Doing Doesn't Work, Do it Some More

As your child progresses through school and her self-esteem begins to unravel, problems are added on top of problems, and it becomes hard to recognize the causes.

Teachers, counselors, and other authority figures have told your youngster, in effect: "Do as I say and the problems will be resolved." At first, she does what they say, but things don't get better. Can you blame her for tuning you, and virtually every other adult, out?

Surviving adolescence is tough for any young person, but for the chemically sensitive teen with little reason to feel good about himself or herself, these can be dangerous years. The youngster who enters adolescence with low self-esteem is at high risk for the hazards the teen years bring, plus a lot more. Drugs or alcohol may be a form of self-medication as well as an effort to win peer acceptance. The social consequences of chemical sensitivity are found on the front page of every major newspaper. Even if self-destructive behavior is avoided, the problems can follow the chemically sensitive child into adulthood.

With a monumental amount of support and skill on the part of parents, teachers, counselors and others, some of these teens do manage to get into adulthood in reasonably good emotional and academic shape, but these are the fortunate few.

All grown-up and still hyper

The symptoms change with adulthood, but they don't go away.

"Hyperactive" or chemically sensitive adults tend to be irritable, impatient, distractible, and likely to suffer from numerous physical problems. They may be compulsive, workaholic, or prone to interrupt. There may be many lost jobs and failed relationships. They are also likely to be the parent of a hyperactive or ADD child.

When the difficult child is not your first

Just because you've raised one or more perfectly contented, well-behaved children, don't think you're likely to escape being blamed for the problems your next child is experiencing.

"By the time she was five, Carolyn had been asked to leave several day care centers. Despite the fact that my older child is a 'model' child, I felt Carolyn's behavior problems were all my fault. I knew nothing but frustration. There were times when I would lock myself in my bedroom so I wouldn't risk hurting her. Even my training as an educator, with a minor in learning disabilities, didn't help me deal with her problems or with my own distress.

"The pediatrician and psychiatrist wanted to put her on Ritalin, but I couldn't agree to that. I was on tranquilizers, but nothing was strong

Why Can't My Child Behave?

enough to blunt the sadness of seeing my little girl in such turmoil. She used to roll and roll on the floor in an effort to get rid of some of the frantic energy going through her little body. She was certain that God 'hated' her because he would not let her 'mind.'

"Last year Carolyn and I went to school together. My job was to try and restrain my daughter while the classroom teacher taught the other children. After six months she was asked to leave and try again next year. These days [after removing the substances which were triggering her behavior problems] I work 50 hours a week at my job while Carolyn receives rewards every week for good behavior."

Can a Diet Help Improve Your Child's Behavior?

Mothers often notice that there are times when their child's behavior seems to change after he has eaten. It could be apple juice, or jelly beans, or a bologna sandwich. It could be Halloween candy or birthday cake that seems to set him off.

You may have tried to avoid certain foods or food additives, only to find yourself bewildered as you attempt to sort out the likely trigger.

Perhaps when you go to a fast food restaurant you get her the orange drink to avoid the caffeine in cola. Within two hours of eating there you have a little terror on your hands. (The cola would probably have been a far better choice than the synthetically colored and flavored orange drink.) Have you ever thought your child might be allergic to chocolate since it seems to "turn him on?" (Most chocolate contains synthetic vanilla flavoring, called "vanillin," and this is a much more likely culprit than the caffeine, the chocolate or the sugar.) Did you ever notice, as I did, that after a few days of an illness -- and not eating much -- your child is strangely calm?

The frustrating thing is that you are operating on scant information, and trying to reach your destination with no road map. In order to identify the likely triggers for your child's behavioral outbursts, you need both information and direction, not to mention good advice and lots of support.

The good news is that you don't have to figure out your own test diet; this has already been done. There is a systematic step-by-step technique that will guide you through the process of testing your child's sensitivities. It is surprisingly easy -- kind of like a math quiz that is very easy when you know the answers! Two decades of successful experience by thousands of families have resulted in the Feingold Program.

A brief background of the Feingold Program

As early as the 1940s, allergists began to publish reports of patients who were sensitive to tartrazine (Yellow dye No. 5). The medical literature contains many references to symptoms such as hives, asthma and nasal congestion.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Doctors also found that aspirin and other substances, commonly found in some fruits and vegetables, have a chemical similarity to synthetic yellow dye. (The chemical name for aspirin is acetylsalicylic acid, and from this comes the term “salicylate,” used to refer to those substances.)

Physicians later found these chemicals affect children as well as adults, and that they can trigger behavior and learning problems. The doctor who first observed this was Ben F. Feingold, M.D., Chief of Allergy at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in San Francisco. Dr. Feingold was both a pediatrician and an allergist, and was a pioneer in the fields of allergy and immunology. In addition to yellow dye and salicylates, he also removed other synthetic food dyes and all artificial flavorings. Dr. Feingold would later expand what he named the “K-P Diet” to exclude the preservatives BHA, BHT and TBHQ. In 1973 he reported the results of his work at the annual conference of the American Medical Association.

His research received widespread publicity, and Random House asked him to write a book parents could use to help their children. The publisher titled the book *Why Your Child is Hyperactive*. As a result of thousands of parents reading this book and using the diet Feingold outlined, volunteer support groups began to spring up around the country; they chose the name “Feingold Associations” to honor the doctor who had made such a difference in their lives. These parent associations began to share information, research brand name foods, and develop programs to make it easier for the new family to successfully use the diet. Since it covers far more than just food, the Association calls it the Feingold Program.

What is the Feingold Program?

First of all, it is a test. For several weeks, you use only foods that are free of synthetic dyes, artificial flavors and three preservatives, as well as a group of foods known as “natural salicylates.” All of these acceptable foods are likely to be well tolerated. If this trial results in an improvement in your child’s behavior, or in other target symptoms, then the test becomes the treatment. You simply continue to enjoy the foods and the positive change in your child. After a few weeks of success you can gradually expand the food choices, adding back natural salicylates one at a time, and watching for any return of the old behaviors. The Program is a form of the time-honored allergy elimination diet. The focus, however, is on all the foods that are allowed, not on those removed.

Your Feingold member packet

The information needed to test the Program is supplied by the Feingold Association, a non-profit organization located in the United States, with “sister” organizations in some other countries.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

In the U.S., the Association researches foods to determine which brands are free of both the obvious and hidden additives. This is accomplished by sending a detailed questionnaire for each product to the manufacturer, asking about both obvious and hidden additives. If the company representative fills out the form, signs his name, and returns it, the product will be listed in *Pure Facts*. Each year, when the regional Foodlists are reprinted, the new brands are added. When a family joins the Association they receive a large package of material that includes a Foodlist for their region of the United States, as well as a handbook with step-by-step guidance, a recipe book, and phone numbers to call with any questions they may have.

The costs are kept as low as possible, thanks to the many hours of donated time from volunteers, and are a fraction of what a family could expect to pay to a commercial facility offering these services – if one existed. [Call (800) 321-3287 for current information about materials, services and fees.]

We've come a long way!

In the 1970s it was difficult to be on the Feingold diet because many foods had to be made from scratch, and eating out was risky. Today, however, the food supply has changed, and Feingold research enables members to shop at supermarkets, use many convenience foods (including candy and ice cream) and even eat at fast food restaurants. Many hard-to-find treats are available through mail order companies catering to member families. Feingold *Foodlists* include over a thousand acceptable brand name foods and non-food products.

The worst offenders

Dr. Feingold noted that a person could be sensitive or allergic to virtually anything. But he believed that of all the substances to which a person could be sensitive or allergic, there are a few groups which are the most likely offenders for those with behavior and learning problems. These are:

Food dyes (a.k.a. food colors, synthetic colors, artificial colors, coal tar dyes, FD&C Yellow No. 5, etc.)

Artificial flavorings (including “vanillin” or synthetic vanilla)

Aspartame (synthetic sweetener) and its powerful cousin Neotame

Three antioxidant preservatives: **BHA, BHT, TBHQ**

Aspirin and a group of foods which contain “**natural salicylates**” -- a naturally occurring chemical which is similar to aspirin.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

The period when salicylates are removed is called Stage One.

Most of the materials provided by the Feingold Association are directed at the family on Stage One. There are many techniques for getting around the limitations during this period, but one of the best is to use the program carefully at the start so that you will see results quickly and will be able to reintroduce these salicylates as soon as possible. The dyes, flavorings, and antioxidants are easily replaced by natural alternatives, and few people mourn their loss. But “natural salicylates” are wholesome foods, and nobody likes to have to give them up, even temporarily.

Those foods not tolerated should be kept out of the diet for awhile longer, but might eventually be tolerated.

The period when natural salicylates are reintroduced is called Stage Two.

The *Feingold Handbook* and other membership materials provide detailed information on salicylates and how to reintroduce them.

Symptoms often helped by diet management

If your child has one or more of the following symptoms they may be triggered by an adverse reaction to food additives or salicylates. Many of these symptoms may also apply to adults.

IMPATIENCE

- Low frustration tolerance
- Demands must be met immediately
- Irritable
- Cries easily or often
- Throws, breaks things

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

- Easily distracted
- Doesn't finish projects
- Doesn't listen to whole story
- Doesn't follow directions

POOR SLEEP HABITS

- Difficult to get to bed

Why Can't My Child Behave?

- Hard to fall asleep
- Restless sleeper
- Has nightmares, bad dreams

MARKED HYPERACTIVITY

- Constant motion
- Runs, does not walk
- Difficulty sitting through meals
- Wiggles legs/hands inappropriately

COMPULSIVE AGGRESSION

- Disruptive at home & school
- Doesn't respond to discipline
- Doesn't recognize danger
- Compulsively repeats action
- Unkind to pets
- Fights with other children
- Poor self-control

IMPULSIVITY

- Unpredictable behavior
- Makes inappropriate noises
- Talks too much
- Talks too loudly
- Interrupts
- Bites and picks nails, skin
- Chews on clothing, other objects
- Overreacts to touch, pain, sound, lights

FREQUENT PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS

- Headaches
- Hives
- Stomachaches
- Ear infections
- Bed-wetting
- Daytime wetting

NEURO-MUSCULAR INVOLVEMENT

- Accident-prone
- Poor muscle coordination
- Poor eye-hand coordination
- Difficulty writing and drawing

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Dyslexia
Speech difficulties
Difficulty with playground activities
Eye-muscle disorder (nystagmus, strabismus)
Tics, some forms of seizures

Note: Always consult a physician to rule out illness.

Questions Parents Ask

Is there some type of test to determine if a diet will help my child's symptoms?

The Feingold Program is a test. If you drank a glass of orange juice each morning at 7:00, and by 8:00 am you had a stomachache, you would probably use your own elimination diet. For a week you might cut out the orange juice, and if the stomachaches disappeared you could be fairly sure that the juice was the culprit. If you wanted to try adding it back to your diet, you could test it out and see if the stomachache returned.

By removing the most likely culprits, you will be able to see if synthetic colors, flavors, certain preservatives, or salicylates are playing a part in your child's problems or in your own health problems.

How soon can I expect to see a change?

There is no way to predict exactly how long it will take, or how much of a change you will notice. For a preschool child who is not on medication, it is typical for parents to notice a significant change in a few days to a week. For a child who was previously on medicine it might take longer.

How can I be sure that a diet program will help at all?

While there are no guarantees, there is a very high probability that your child will be helped. Volunteer organizations do not even form, let alone persist for decades, unless the volunteers experience positive feedback from their work.

Your likelihood of success depends on many factors, especially how carefully you follow the program and whether your child has additional problems such as food allergies or sensitivities to substances in the environment.

If a family has the current Feingold membership materials, including a Foodlist for their area, and follows the program carefully, it is very likely

Why Can't My Child Behave?

that they will see an improvement. The issue is generally not *if* the program will help, but *how much* help it will provide.

Some families find that their child has additional sensitivities that go beyond the scope of the Feingold Program. Experienced volunteers can often recommend other nonprofit organizations for help in these cases.

Will my child's schoolwork be helped?

There is generally a significant improvement in schoolwork. Eliminating these additives won't teach the child math, but should enable him to pay attention so he can learn what is being taught. Behavior is likely to be the first thing to improve, with academic performance showing a more gradual but steady improvement.

My child's symptoms are so severe; how can a simple change in food make a real difference?

A switch from brand A to brand B may seem simple, but removing toxic chemical additives from a child's diet is not a simple matter. Food processing is complex, and it has taken many years for volunteers to become proficient at identifying places where additives can be hidden. What's more, companies continually come up with ways to circumvent the few labeling laws that exist. Often the laws are simply ignored.

Once the dietary changes are made, parents and professionals report even severe symptoms have shown improvement.

Is this program hard to follow?

Replacing the food in your pantry with "Feingold acceptable" is harder than using what's already there, but easier than getting through the day with a child who is aggressive, destructive and rarely sleeps.

Being selective about which foods you buy at a fast food chain is harder than ordering anything you want, but it's easier than handling that dreaded daily phone call from the school.

Using pear juice in place of apple juice (a natural salicylate) might be inconvenient, but so is washing wet sheets every morning.

Chances are, you are already under a lot of stress! This might not be the best time for you to consider making changes in your shopping and food preparation. On the other hand, if changing brands will bring about a calmer, happier household, then the sooner you begin, the sooner you will be able to enjoy the benefits. (By the way, I'm a very lazy cook, and have been happily using the Program since 1975.)

Is it expensive?

That depends on the type of food your family likes. My grocery bill went up in some areas and down in others.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Thrifty shoppers already know that the most expensive foods are the highly processed ones. Compare the cost per pound of pre-flavored oatmeal packets (up to \$5/pound) with scooping a pound of plain rolled oats from the supermarket's bulk bin (59 cents/pound). I microwave the rolled oats, add a little sweetener or jam and end up with virtually the same breakfast (minus additives) in very little time, but at a fraction of the cost of the "convenience" product.

A major benefit was that once our family got on the Program, and my daughter's ear infections stopped, and my husband's headaches were history, the doctor's bills stopped as well. Doctors are very nice to have around, but I prefer to pay the grocer!

Is this a "health food" diet?

There are many items in a health food store that are "off limits" to the family new to the Feingold Program. Don't have blind faith that all of the foods are as healthy as claimed.

You will find lots of food in both supermarkets and health food stores that are acceptable; select those your family likes best. I buy a variety of groceries from both types of stores. My family likes nitrite-free bacon from the health food store, but we prefer the natural rocky road ice cream I buy in the discount grocery store.

Our favorite yogurt & green onion potato chips as well as cheese puffs come from the health food store. But I get pretzels at the supermarket.

Does the Program allow sugar and snack foods?

As you can see from the answers above, the program does not eliminate these, although we encourage families to use sugar in moderation, and avoid giving sweets when the child has an empty stomach. (It would be nice if we all loved lima beans more than chocolate brownies . . . or would it?) The Program doesn't tell you *what* to eat, rather it shows you how to find suitable brands of the type of food you like. I compare it to *Consumer's Reports*, which does not tell you whether or not to buy a car, but lets you know about your options.

Do I have to cook "from scratch"?

If you have access to a current Foodlist -- either from the Feingold Association in the United States or from one of the sister groups in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, etc. -- you should be able to use the processed foods listed. If you live in an area where there is no food research, you will probably do quite a lot of food preparation during the early days of the Program. You will be able to gradually add in processed foods, watching for any reaction.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

This is not as hard as it may sound. Parents tend to learn very quickly and usually do not make the same mistake twice. This book will help you understand more about food processing and where additives may be found, and will give you practical hints for getting around the pitfalls.

Can our family still eat out at restaurants?

A child or adult is likely to be most sensitive during the early weeks of the Program. If you can avoid restaurant food for a few weeks, it will help you see good results more quickly. In the long run, it will be a lot easier.

People who are experienced on the Program can eat out at nearly any restaurant and do very well. By carefully avoiding the additives/salicylates in the beginning, many people appear to lose much of their sensitivity. It's been many years since my family began the Program, and we can eat virtually anywhere, make educated choices and not experience a reaction.

My child is a very picky eater; how can I get her to accept new foods?

You will probably be able to find natural versions of those few foods she likes, and you may be surprised to find some of her favorites are already on the Foodlist. Stay as close as you can to the foods your child enjoys. As she becomes more reasonable, you will probably be able to gradually expand her choices.

The most important thing to keep in mind during the early weeks is not to emphasize nutrition, but to have your child accept the changes that are necessary. (Forfeit the battle to win the war.)

What happens when she's away from home and someone offers her food?

If you present the Program in a positive way and your child experiences the benefits it brings, you probably won't have to be concerned about this. It has been our experience that once they understand it, most of the children are very determined to stick to their diet. (I know you probably don't believe this. I wouldn't have either!)

How will I know which brands of food are OK to use?

The Feingold Association researches foods and publishes books listing acceptable brand name products. In many cases, a company makes several products that are acceptable and other varieties that are not. It can be pretty tricky, so follow your Foodlist carefully.

Since manufacturers change their products frequently, the Association publishes updates in their newsletter -- generally 10 times a year -- and revises all of the Foodlists each year. Please do not use an out-of-date list, since you may end up sabotaging your efforts.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Can't I just read labels and avoid the additives that way?

Much of the effort of our Product Information Committee is spent tracking down additives that are in foods but are not included in the ingredient listing.

If your child is not particularly sensitive, you might be able to see results even though you aren't always using "pure" food. If he is sensitive to small amounts of chemical additives, however, your results could be disappointing.

Any time you can eliminate synthetic colors and flavors, that's great! But please don't confuse this with the Feingold Program. (It's like Alcoholics Anonymous saying that if you skip the bourbon and vodka, then whiskey and gin are OK.)

What are food additives made from?

You might wish you hadn't asked, but here goes: Food dyes used to be made from coal tar oil (yummy!) but are now synthesized from petroleum. Petroleum is made from crude oil -- the "black gold" which pollutes the oceans when it spills.

Artificial flavorings can be made from virtually anything; there are no rules. A single flavoring might be made from hundreds of different chemicals.

The preservatives BHA, BHT and TBHQ are made from petroleum.

Does the Feingold Program eliminate all additives?

No. Only those found to be the major source of learning/behavior problems are eliminated. A few others are a problem for some, but not all, of our members (MSG, sodium benzoate, nitrites, corn syrup, calcium propionate, fluoride and sulfiting agents). They are not removed, but many people choose to avoid them.

The Association recommends members avoid the use of synthetic sweeteners such as aspartame, saccharine and cyclamates.

If the additives are harmful, why doesn't the government ban them?

This is a long and complex story (spell that "\$tory"). Many dyes and other additives have already been banned; it's the stubborn survivors that are causing so many problems.

What about all those pesticides?

Our family was successful on the Feingold Program for over a decade before we had our first organic carrot. If you can easily obtain

Why Can't My Child Behave?

organic foods, that's great, but it isn't required. We recognize the harm that can be caused to our environment by their excessive use and that some people must avoid pesticides, but they are not specifically addressed in the Program.

Will my child have to be on this diet for the rest of his life?

As a child gets older and stays away from synthetic chemicals, he tends to develop a tolerance level. But as you become more knowledgeable about food and food additives the question may shift from "Why can't we eat imitation red cherry gelatin?" to "I can just as easily make natural cherry gelatin that tastes terrific; why would I want to eat the other stuff?"

Even the very young Feingolders catch on to the fact that the rather disgusting chemicals added to foods enable companies to save money by eliminating real ingredients from their products.

Question to ponder: If the food is fake, why can't I pay for it with Monopoly money?

Do doctors recommend the Feingold Program?

We receive many physician referrals, and some of our members are physicians using the Program for their child and/or themselves.

Most of our referrals come from doctors who have seen patients successfully use our Program. Some doctors are interested in the connection between nutrition and behavior/health, but many are not.

I've heard that scientific studies show that diet either does not help learning/behavior problems, or that it helps only a tiny fraction of children.

Feingold volunteers have heard this too! If you go back to the early studies and read what the scientists conducting the research originally reported, you would see a very different conclusion. Although none of the studies were a test of the Feingold Program as it is actually used, and most had design flaws and other mistakes, they still yielded very supportive data.

Newer studies have been more carefully designed and have yielded extremely positive results. But such information is not favorable to the many vested interests dealing with foods and food additives and their effects, so this information is not likely to be publicized. That is the topic of another book, too long to address here, but you will find a summary in the last section of this book.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Do I have to put the whole family on the Program?

No, but do you *really* want to have to cook two dinners a night?!

Why should you do double shopping, have to keep some foods separated, run the risk of using the wrong product for your Feingolder, and make him feel left out?

Take a look at the second section of this book that tells you more about food dyes and other additives; then ask yourself if you would want *any* family member to eat them.

When a child is chemically sensitive, at least one parent is also likely to be sensitive, and often the siblings are as well -- though not necessarily to the same degree. We all have the ability to tolerate negative things (stress, germs, polluted air, synthetic food additives) but our tolerance varies. Your Feingolder may be more vulnerable to certain chemicals than the rest of the family, but you can be sure they are having an effect on everyone.

I don't want to wait for my Foodlist before I get started. What can I do right now?

(If you live outside the United States, and are in a country which does not have a support group offering a list of acceptable brand name products, this information should be helpful.)

The First Four Days of Feingold

Many families of young children see a significant change in behavior after carefully following the diet for only a few days. Occasionally, an older child or an adult will also have a rapid response. This four-day sample diet is designed to help you, as well as to give an idea of some of the foods permitted, but it represents only a fraction of the items suitable for use on the Program. Although these foods are nutritious, it is not intended that they be the only foods one consumes for a prolonged time.

NON-FOOD ITEMS

Toothpaste: Tom's of Maine* Spearmint or Peppermint or Fennel
or use baking soda, or just water

Omit vitamins

Avoid products containing fragrances

Avoid products that would result in dyes on the skin

BEVERAGES

Baby food pear juice (available in large bottles)

Pure pineapple juice (dilute, if you like)

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Grapefruit juice (sweeten, if you like, with granulated sugar)
Lemonade made from fresh lemons and granulated sugar
Whole milk (not low fat or skimmed)
Shake made with 1/2 cup whole milk, 1/2 cup pineapple juice, 1/2
banana; mix in blender
Water

BREAKFAST

Oatmeal (not instant); sweeten with white or brown sugar, add
whole milk or non-salicylate fruit juice
French toast - homemade w/eggs, milk, real 100% maple syrup,
or sprinkle with granulated or confectioners' sugar
Eggs (real, not imitation); use butter (not margarine) or Wesson* Oil
for cooking
Plain Puffed Rice or Puffed Wheat, whole milk, sugar
Toast with real butter or honey

LUNCH

Peanut butter and honey sandwich (or substitute banana for
the honey)
Tuna salad sandwich made with Hellmann's* or Best Foods*
Mayonnaise (look for water-pack tuna which does not contain
"hydrolyzed vegetable protein" and use original versions of mayonnaise,
not "low-fat," "fat-free," "low cholesterol," etc.)
Leftover chicken from dinner -- sliced or made into salad;
add celery, if you like
Egg salad sandwich, carrot sticks

DINNER

Roast chicken, baked potatoes w/real butter, fresh or frozen plain green
vegetable (no sauces); season with salt, butter, black
pepper if you like
Broiled fish fillet (season with lemon, garlic and butter if you like),
salad or any vegetable except tomato, cucumber and peppers
(Make a salad dressing with lemon juice and Wesson Oil)
Pork chops (broil or season w/flour and sauté in oil), sweet potato
(with butter or mashed with pineapple juice), green vegetable
Ground beef patties (made with plain chopped meat), corn (on the
cob or canned or frozen plain), green vegetable
[Note: for food safety, always cook hamburger well done.]

SNACK, DESSERT IDEAS

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Eagle Thins* potato chips
Fresh pears
Bananas
Any melon
Whitman's* All Natural Chocolate Bar
or Baker's* Sweet Chocolate Bar, cut up (sold with baking supplies)
Haagan Dazs* vanilla or chocolate ice cream
Popcorn made from plain kernels and cooked with real butter or Wesson* oil

For breads, see the section of this book on Foods.

**(The above brand name products are acceptable at press time; contact the Association to learn if they are still included in Foodlists. These brands were listed because they are generally available nationwide. Foodlists contain many other acceptable brands.)*

The focus of the Program is on the many foods you can eat, not on those you cannot. By planning a few meals, with enough foods to get you through the first few days, you will see there really is a nice variety available.

The casual Feingolder: Suppose I just avoid the obvious additives by checking ingredient labels on foods -- would this help?

By all means, avoid things like food dyes and artificial flavorings whenever you can. Any harmful additive you can remove is a good idea. But you will not be able to test the Feingold Program in this way because you will still be consuming hidden additives. If you do see an improvement in your child as a result of making small changes, that's great! But if you see little or no improvement, please don't conclude that the diet won't work; you probably have a fairly sensitive child, and perhaps one who is also sensitive to natural salicylates.

Our family life is chaotic! My older kids are not easy to please, and my younger child is on a heavy dose of medicine for ADD. But I don't want to wait till life calms down, as we need help so badly. What would you suggest?

You might want to start by just eliminating the unwanted additives, and not deal with salicylates at the beginning. The good news is that this will make it much easier to implement the diet, but the drawback is that you may not see as much improvement as you would if you were on a careful Stage One (salicylate-free) diet.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

If you are willing to see diet management as a long-range project, and you don't get discouraged if success comes slowly, this is a good approach to take. If your family has been using products with various additives, it may be an easier transition to focus on eliminating them first, and later give Stage One a trial.

[Note: For a child taking medication on a regular basis, and especially multiple drugs, the Feingold Association may be able to help you find them in an uncolored form. Be sure to rely on your physician's guidance if you plan to phase them out.]

Does the Feingold Program have any risks?

Dr. Feingold used the term "no harm, no risk" and while this is true, there have been a small number of children who seem to have withdrawal symptoms after they stop eating synthetic additives. In a few cases, a child will become worse before he improves, especially if he was taking multiple medicines.

Statistics - what are the chances this diet will help me?

In 1980 one of the local Feingold chapters compiled a statistical analysis of their membership. Members were sent a questionnaire, and 55% of them -- a total of 255 -- responded. They provided the following information:

The typical Feingold person is very much the same as Dr. Feingold described -- a male, between the ages of 6 and 12, who is considered by his family to be hyperactive. He has been on the Feingold Program for 6 months to 2 years, and his mother was the first to realize he had problems, usually prior to age 2. She first learned of the Program from a friend, and the whole family follows it.

There has been "great" or "much" improvement in the symptoms. Drugs had not been used to control the symptoms, and would probably not be used, even without the diet. (There is a great deal of resistance to drugs either on principle or due to previous experiences.) In addition to the various symptoms of hyperactivity identified by Dr. Feingold and others, our typical Feingold person reacts to a diet infraction by a noticeable change in his speech (rapid, loud, incoherent, and/or constant).

During her pregnancy and childbirth, his mother experienced some difficulty and/or required some procedure other than anesthesia. The child experiences a severe reaction to artificial color and flavor, and also reacts to BHT, some salicylates, and other chemicals (BHA, MSG, sodium benzoate, and sodium nitrite were specifically identified in some cases, as well as sugar).

Hyperactivity was the main reason for beginning the diet in 96% of the cases. In 43% the symptoms were apparent by the age of one year. 81%

Why Can't My Child Behave?

of the respondents are male, and 36% of them have blond hair; 19% are female, 41% have blond hair. 16% have been adopted.

Salicylates affect 89%, however 66% of the salicylate sensitive can tolerate some of them. 41% have food allergies, 35% have inhalant allergies, 47% are extremely sensitive to touch and 38% to noise.

49% reported “great improvement” from the diet, and 37% reported “much improvement.” Only 1% reported no improvement. Of the families reporting great improvement, 77% say the whole family follows the Program and 93% use only pure foods and some salicylates. 72% of the families reporting much improvement use only pure foods and some salicylates.

Summary

In the years since these statistics were compiled, the Association’s food research and information has improved significantly and the success rate seems to have increased as well.

For most children it isn’t a cut-and-dried case of “the Program working” or “the Program not working.” It’s generally a matter of how much help the Program provides, of whether the family needs to go further to get an even better response. We rarely hear from a member who reports that they are not having *any* success.

The negative reports

Dr. Feingold’s work was met with vigorous opposition by the lobbies representing the major food, chemical and pharmaceutical industries. More than two decades later little has changed.

Feingold: The Next Generation

This chapter is a tribute to “our kids” who have been following the Feingold Program for a decade or more.

This is a tribute to their parents, as well, particularly the moms who have traveled what has often proven to be a rough road, who have fought for their children and have won. It’s also an acknowledgement of those who have fought just as hard, but whose kids would not stay on the diet and didn't make it -- at least as of now. Fortunately, they are in the small minority, but we salute these parents as well.

Why did our successful kids make it while others have not? We find that the parent’s determination to follow the program is a crucial factor. In the sample stories we proudly present, one or both parents was an active Feingold volunteer. The successful parent gained much knowledge

Why Can't My Child Behave?

through work in the Association. Volunteering provided close contact with others who were also acquiring expertise.

The Feingold mom learned to speak up for herself by speaking up on her child's behalf. Many times she was called to defy the conventional wisdom because she knew her child better than anyone else -- whether it was a neighbor, teacher, doctor, or mother-in-law. "Her teachers were no help at all," notes one mother. "They thought I was a raving lunatic." Others found professionals who were sympathetic, or at least open-minded, and taught them about the diet.

Through their involvement in the Association, mothers of the children described here gained the motivation and confidence to pursue challenging careers they would not otherwise have considered. Whether it was in their Feingold work or in their personal lives, when they saw something askew, they did what was necessary to put it right. These moms learned from many sources, including their Feingold kids. Meeting the challenge of caring for their difficult child helped give them a better perspective on what's really important; it enabled them to be better parents for their other children.

The message from the veteran moms to the new members is this: There may be times when you feel like you're at war with the world, including the child you're trying to help. But don't give up; there's too much at stake, and there's a good chance that you are his best hope for the kind of happy endings you read about here.

But first, a word about the drug scene

These Feingold parents expressed gratitude that their children had been spared the disaster of drug abuse.

The common thread seems to be that our youngsters recall how it felt to be out of control, and they don't want to be in that position again. Not only do they resist taking medications of all kinds, they seem to understand that their bodies, which have been sent out of control from a colored lollipop, would be especially vulnerable to the effects of illicit drugs.

Tommy

People who know Tommy today find it very hard to believe he had been a toddler who needed constant attention, was always fussy, crying, and in "perpetual motion." He didn't sleep easily or well and had a chronic problem with rashes.

As a senior in high school he is well liked by everyone who knows him and was nominated for "best dressed," "best smile" and "best looking." An exceptional athlete with excellent motor control, he plays

Why Can't My Child Behave?

varsity basketball and ice hockey. His teachers like him too, and refer to Tommy as a “class leader.”

Like so many Feingold successes, Tom isn't interested in experimenting with drugs. “Having to say ‘no’ to Hi-C in kindergarten made it easier for him to say no to the bad stuff,” his mom observes. “In fact, he went into kindergarten reading labels.” Tommy will be starting college in the fall, and his family is glad he won't be far from home. Not only do his parents like having him around, but (the ultimate compliment) even his sisters enjoy him!

David

“On Monday, Wednesday and Friday David took Ritalin. On Tuesday and Thursday he took Dexedrine. And on Saturday and Sunday I took Phenobarbital,” recalls his mother.

She remembers how bad it was before her son went on the Feingold diet at age 7. Even after that there were problems until she realized how unusually sensitive he was to salicylates. One year she made his birthday cake with a recipe that called for a small amount of orange juice. After he had eaten a piece, David went outside to play. Cindy found her son pushing a playmate on their swing. David was ‘perseverating’ -- pushing and pushing, with a glazed look in his eyes. The other child held on for dear life as the swing looped all the way around the frame of the swing set.

Today David is a senior in college, majoring in psychology. He is a computer whiz, and loves working with children. “Kids are attracted to him like a magnet.” He hasn't had a problem with drug abuse as have so many people his age. “David avoids all kinds of medicine, and has to be really uncomfortable before he'll even take a Tylenol.”

Michael

At age 5, Michael was diagnosed as dyslexic and suffering from visual perception deficits in five areas. He was a terror to live with, and his parents were advised to place him in a school for brain-injured children. Instead, his parents began using the Feingold diet shortly after reading *Why Your Child Is Hyperactive*.

Today, Mike is a junior in college. A major in communications/business/public relations, he is successful -- both socially and scholastically. He copes well with whatever comes his way, enjoys working with people, and is very much in control of his life.

Michael still has an abundance of energy, but channels it productively. He is involved in many sports, and in high school, had a unique technique for winning football games. Before the game, he chewed red bubble gum, which brought on the aggressive, hyper behavior that got goals. Then,

Why Can't My Child Behave?

he'd wear himself out in the game. "Michael didn't do drugs," his mom noted, "he did red bubble gum."

Andrea

"It all should have gone so smoothly." Andrea's mother recalled. "John and I waited over seven years for our little girl. I was a registered nurse with experience in pediatrics, and an advocate of wholesome foods. Andrea was nursed, and later fed homemade baby food -- I was a real Earth Mother! Why, then, were we worn out by this incredibly strong and active baby who scarcely ever slept?"

"Some of my most vivid memories date back to the time Andrea was 18 months old -- like the time she had a bath with dyed, perfumed bubble bath powder and became wild, banging her head against the side of the tub. Or, the small drink of red imitation punch she had at the coffee hour after church, and then she ran around biting people.

"When I put her out in the backyard to play, she'd strip off her diaper and be over the fence in no time. And more than once I saw her at the top of our neighbor's 30-foot tree! Named 'wiggle butt' by the neighbors, she could get out of just about any restraint."

This bright little girl, who spoke in sentences at 21 months, grew to be more and more frustrated. By the time she was two and a half, Andrea's temper tantrums were becoming increasingly frequent -- up to ten a day. Her parents found spanking was totally ineffective and "time-out was a joke."

While they were shopping, Andrea pulled one of her typical disappearances, but her mom delayed the search just long enough to copy down the phone number on a flier advertising a diet for hyperactive children.

The family went on the Feingold diet -- most of the way -- and saw a big improvement in their toddler. But it wasn't until they gave up the unapproved brands of cheese and crackers that they had complete success.

Her parents were astonished to find that a tiny amount of an additive could have a profound effect on their child. Andrea was 4 1/2 when they moved to a new location. She began to have episodes of severe depression, which were blamed on the move. It turned out that the culprit was the brand of milk they were now using, which had preservatives in the vitamin A fortification.

Now in ninth grade, Andrea has made her family proud of her and of her accomplishments. Last year she won the Scholastic Writing Award for the region of her state. She is making As in advanced math, is a talented artist and loves dramatics.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Andrea has had to cut back on basketball, soccer and band in order to have time for a new interest -- jazz dancing. She is active in her church youth group and has a busy social life.

In addition to her regular classes, she teaches German to elementary aged children and has participated in the writing and filming of several videotapes for her school.

Neighbors may have called Andrea "wiggle butt," but the name her teachers use is "a joy."

Lita

"She stayed on the diet most of the time, but after she had been good for as long as she could, she would decide it was time for a 'holiday.' Then the nightmares (which we now know were actually hallucinations) would begin. Lita was terrified of them and this fear would make her want to get back on the diet. But she just couldn't handle temptation on her own; sometimes I would come into school and eat lunch with her to bolster her will power.

"Another consequence of going off her diet was a change in her school work; Lita was unable to read or write well after she had consumed the forbidden additives. Salicylates also had a severe effect on her schoolwork, and she must still be careful not to overdo them."

Lita has just learned that she has been accepted into the college of her choice. Her ambition is to study law. It may not seem feasible for a high school senior whose reading ability is only at the 8th grade level, but Lita is bright, articulate, and blessed with a great memory. She so successfully uses these talents to compensate that she has been an honor roll student throughout junior high and high school, and is receiving top grades in her honors English course.

Her maturity and ability to interact with others has brought a long list of honors and responsibilities. Lita was chosen as her school's representative by the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation -- an organization that identifies future leaders. At 15 she was president of her religious organization's youth chapter, and the group won many awards that year. Lita has been vice president of the regional council of B'nai Brith and is now membership chairman. For several years she represented her class in the school's student government association, is a member of the law club, and was selected to attend the Goucher College mock senate.

Derrick

For Derrick's parents, the hardest part of dealing with their 3 1/2-year-old was his sleeplessness and nightmares. Their day started at 5 am with a toddler who experienced everything with enormous intensity -- whether he

Why Can't My Child Behave?

was eating, playing, laughing or crying. This went on daily until about midnight.

Worn down by the activity, his mom recalls how it felt before their preschooler began the Feingold diet, “When you’re in the trenches, you think you’ll never make it through.”

At 16, both Derrick and his parents are seeing the results of their time and patience with the diet. After trying many sports, Derrick has discovered his remarkable ability as a cyclist. The sport enables him to put his abundant energy to good use, and the rigors of training have instilled remarkable self-discipline.

Derrick’s tendency to focus intently on just one thing created problems in school, but in cycling it’s been a great advantage. The ultra-healthy diet required for training is not much different from the food he was accustomed to at home. And he stays away from the green sports drinks, which make him physically sick.

Today, Derrick is very healthy, with the endurance necessary to cycle 170 miles in a day.

Chris

“He was always wound tight, all helter skelter, into everything, and he wore everybody out.” In addition to dealing with the problems of hyperactivity, Chris has also overcome some of the symptoms of Tourette syndrome. (The Feingold Program successfully addressed the hyperactivity, but did not help Chris’ Tourette symptoms; a regimen of vitamins has been effective. Diet has helped some children with Tourette syndrome. See part three of this book for details.)

This year Chris will be graduating first in his high school class, a National Merit Commended Scholar with a better than 4.0 average. He is president of the United High School Council for the Fort Worth Independent School District.

In a letter of recommendation to Rice University, the principal of his school called him “one of the most outstanding students I have encountered in my career.” He has received an early admission to Rice, but will have to make some hard choices as his interests and abilities cover so many areas: pre-law, international business, journalism and architecture.

Music has been an important part of his life, so it wasn’t a surprise that he had the lead in the school’s musical this year. What was a surprise was that the part also required dancing; as a preschooler Chris had been diagnosed as having gross motor disabilities.

His parents believe that his experience in traveling throughout the world with a choir group has enhanced his maturation. He holds down two part-time jobs: lawn care service and working in a gourmet grocery store.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Chris especially likes the gourmet food. Having spent most of his life on the Feingold diet, his palate “knows the difference between real food and the synthetic stuff.”

Michael

He was a happy, likeable child -- not defiant or hard to live with. But Michael had a great deal of trouble coping with his schoolwork. He became a real charmer, and learned to talk his way out of just about any tight spot.

His parents reluctantly tried Ritalin for a year, but couldn't stand to see their son turned into a “zombie.” They learned of the Feingold diet when the support groups were first forming, and fourteen years later are profoundly grateful for the help and moral support they received. This support gave Michael the courage to stick with the diet even back then when there were so few prepared foods allowed.

His mother relates how one day his teacher gave him a cupcake. He wouldn't eat it, but kept it on his desk all day, explaining, “I just want to look at it.” Today, at 21, his proud parents note that Michael is as sweet natured as ever. He takes a great deal of pride in himself and in his new career in the Navy.

Mark

Poor speech, weak motor skills, and very slow to walk -- the doctor told Mark's mother it was because she babied him.

He did not have behavior problems, but was extremely learning disabled and received remedial help for six years. Mark was dyslexic and unable to speak clearly. “I worked with him for years to get him to recognize the alphabet,” his mom recalls.

Today Mark knows that his so-called developmental difficulties were triggered by BHA, BHT and salicylates, which brought about severe motion sickness. They affect his balance, hearing, and perception. (He is also very sensitive to mint flavoring.)

It is difficult for anyone to believe that Mark once had any learning problem at all. He is enrolled in advanced classes in high school, earning As and Bs. His teachers have noted he is able to store and retrieve enormous amounts of information. He also writes well. His motor skills are fine, he runs track, is very personable, and is doing well in all areas. “For us, it's a miracle,” his mother relates. “But he'd lose it all if he went off the diet.” Mark is aware of this and monitors what he eats. The phrase that best describes Mark is one his mother never expected to hear ten years ago as she sought help for her little boy: today Mark is “perfectly normal.”

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Mary Jo's Story

Our child appeared normal in every respect as an infant; there seemed to be no problems until he was about two. We began to suspect then that he was perhaps more active than most two-year-olds, but he was such a happy, bright, good-natured little ray of sunshine that we just loved him and accepted him as he was.

We did have to supervise him closely to prevent injuries, and there were still many of them. He was a regular visitor to the emergency room, and his father (a physician) stitched him up a number of times during his early years.

It was not until he was five that we began to suspect that there was something more complex than just "all boy" behavior. He exhibited most of the classical characteristics of hyperkinesis. The one characteristic not evident was a tendency to aggression. He was, in fact, rather submissive to his more dominant older brother, and was gentle and loving to his baby sister. He had lots of friends and was very popular in the neighborhood.

My attempts to get my concerns across to our pediatrician brought forth comments many parents hear in those early years of uneasiness: "He's just all boy, Mother. Let him be. You're over-anxious. Too bad you don't live on a farm where he could roam freely and not be suppressed. He'll outgrow it, etc., etc."

At age seven, when our son was in the second grade, it had become very obvious to everyone that this bright child simply could not concentrate well enough to perform normal tasks at his grade level. He read poorly and could not write. Worst of all, he began to suspect that there was "something wrong" with himself and began to experience terrible frustration at being unable to do what was expected of him. His happy, outgoing personality began to change a little, and for the first time we saw aggressive tendencies and a real spark of defiance. As the pressure increased, so did this behavior.

At this point I decided to force a showdown with our pediatrician, and Providence took a hand. I had never seen my son more "turned on" than when we arrived at the doctor's office for his exam. He explored every drawer and closet, spilled a jar of tongue blades, walked on his heels when asked to walk on his toes, wiggled and squirmed, hollered into the stethoscope, asked silly questions, and even locked himself in the bathroom accidentally (I think) when asked to produce a urine specimen. The doctor was preparing to take the door off the hinges when he was finally able to unlock it. In general, my seven-year old made a shambles of the examination room and left the pediatrician out of breath and somewhat disheveled. I made no effort to intervene and sat mute while all

Why Can't My Child Behave?

this went on. When we all got ourselves pulled together the pediatrician said, “(expletive deleted!!) I see what you mean. We have to do something!”

I couldn't resist saying, “Maybe you're just over-anxious. Why don't you move your office to a farm where children could have room to explore and not be suppressed?”

From that point, we obtained a psychological evaluation, and a neurological evaluation. No abnormalities could be found, but it was the consensus of opinion of all concerned that this was an “organically driven” child and a trial on Ritalin was in order.

The next year was terrible for our family. The side effects of the drug were very hard for all of us to endure. I won't dwell on this except to say that I wish I could give this year back to my son and erase it from my memory. It will always be a source of pain to me that we allowed it to take place. But the agony of that year forced me to realize that we had to find another way. I simply could not abandon my son to a lifetime of drugs, and I could not bear to see him suffer from either the frustration of being unable to control his behavior or the side effects of the drug used to control it. It was then that I began to read anything and everything I could get my hands on about hyperactivity and learning disabilities.

As I read, I picked up more and more information about the influence of nutrition and the effects of what we ingest. Eventually, I learned about Dr. Feingold's book and it opened a door of hope for us for which I will be eternally grateful.

Our son, after a few weeks on the diet, was taken off Ritalin and began to function as a calm, in-control, well behaved little boy. He was eight at the time, and he is now twelve. We have worked to remedy his “learning disabilities” which in actuality were only gaps in his knowledge that occurred while he was unable to function normally in school. We have found that he is indeed capable of learning and achieving. He brings home Bs and Cs and some As on his report card, and received satisfactory marks on behavior, citizenship, attitude, work habits, etc. He made the basketball team this year, and won third place in the Science Fair.

But the point is that he is functioning normally in a world where the demands made on him are the same as those made on the other children in our family and on others in his peer group. He is again the happy, outgoing, very gentle, very loving boy who has every reason to look forward to a full and productive life as a contributing member of society. When he was nine years old and things were once again going well in his life, he spontaneously made a poster and gave it to me. He wrote a message on it and decorated it with drawings of sailboats, seagulls,

Why Can't My Child Behave?

flowers, clouds and nice things. The message was "I am what God meant me to be."

How can we prove that all this happened? What proves to us that it was not just a fluke? Just the result of extra parental attention? Just the result of some variation in his development? We do feel we have proof -- we find that all the gains he has made can be reversed by dietary infraction. When our son is allowed to ingest the artificial substances, he reverts within a short time to the old behavior. We see the hyperactivity, the inability to concentrate, a certain irritability and some aggression, and most interesting of all, his handwriting deteriorates markedly. After a period of three or four days this will clear up and he again becomes the calm, controlled boy I described above. We've seen this happen over and over when we've allowed a dietary infraction to occur. He is aware when the change occurs, and will remark to us, "I feel dreamy," or "I know I am getting hyper." Frequently he will complain of headaches when he has ingested a no-no.

One of the things his father finds most interesting is that when his diet is carefully monitored and all is going well, this child who could not concentrate can beat the socks off his Phi Beta dad at chess!

How can I gain my child's cooperation?

*If you're typical of other parents trying out the Feingold Program you probably think, "My child will **never** cooperate."*

But most children do cooperate when the program is presented properly. Consider which approach is best for your family, and this begins by taking a look at your own feelings. When you read over this information, you may be thinking, "I can't believe all the disgusting things that are put in our food; what a rip-off. I'm glad there's a way to eat all the things we love without exposing the family to these additives!" Or, you may think, "What a chore; I'll have to do extra shopping to find some of these products; a loaf of bread or a quart of ice cream may cost more; I hate to think of the kids having to give up their multi-colored candies, cereal, etc. Maybe I can just change a few of the brands and get away with it."

If you see the program in a positive light, this attitude will be conveyed to your family, but if you consider it a deprivation, this will come across too, particularly if your children are older.

Spend some time reviewing your new member packet and exploring your own feelings. Think about the trade-off: short-term inconvenience may lead to long-term rewards. Consider that the hardest part of the Feingold program is likely to be the first weeks when you're getting

Why Can't My Child Behave?

accustomed to changing some of the brands you use. You will soon feel comfortable using the items on the Foodlist, and by that time you should be reaping rewards in the form of a much-improved child and calmer family life. If you carefully follow Stage One you might see a noticeable change in just a few days, and this is all you will need to give you the enthusiasm to continue. At that point, the effort required will seem trivial compared to the joy of seeing your child function normally. After having worked so hard at other techniques that were unsuccessful, you may find you welcome the chance to work at something that produces positive results. When selecting the right brand of potato chips, or skipping the spaghetti sauce makes such a difference, it's a small price to pay.

Substitute, don't deprive

Identify the things your child may be most reluctant to give up, and find alternatives.

* If he loves the toothpaste pump that exudes red, white and blue paste (a no-no) then substitute a snazzy cartoon character cup or toothbrush, along with one of the OK toothpastes.

* If she enjoys getting gumballs at the supermarket, let her buy one of the vending machine trinkets instead.

* If your family likes cookies made with M&M's in the dough, go ahead and make the recipe, using Stage One ingredients and the natural alternative -- Sundrops (found in many health food stores).

* If the lollypop from the bank is a treat, keep a naturally colored lollypop in your purse and trade with your child.

The very young child

The younger the child, the more control you are likely to have over her food. It may mean educating your spouse, the relatives, or day care provider, but at least you don't have to deal with school lunches. The younger the child, the easier and more effective the Feingold program is likely to be.

Pre-schoolers

For nursery school snacks, it will probably be best for you to provide them for your youngster. If the staff is not familiar with the Program they may have difficulty understanding why you are concerned about food. People who don't know your child as well as you do may look at the disruptive behaviors and assume that they are deliberate. But if you can

Why Can't My Child Behave?

bring about a noticeable change, if your pre-schooler changes from the terror of the sandbox to a pleasant child, the staff will have a very strong motive to support your efforts. “Feingold kids” are generally very bright, and once your pre-schooler feels the difference, he will probably be eager to keep himself on the diet.

Elementary school-aged children

The child now moves from the more casual approach of preschool to one that is structured. Your student is expected to stand in line, stay seated, pay attention, complete written work, etc. A teacher who is unfamiliar with some of the problems of chemical sensitivity may view them as lazy or defiant behaviors. Given enough frustrating experiences, a student may eventually become defiant.

Read over some of the stories in this book about children who have been helped by the Feingold program, and share them with your child. This is an excellent way of explaining that abnormal additives can create problems for normal people.

You will need to enlist your child's help as she faces the temptations ahead. School breaks and vacations are good times to begin the program since you have far more control over the food consumed. If you can make this period a fairly pure test of Stage One, you might see results before the break is over. Once she experiences the difference the program can bring about, she will have a good reason to stick with it.

If a major junk food event is coming up, talk with your child about a special toy that can be given in exchange for saying “no” to the unapproved foods. Shortly before Halloween, one mother described how she and her daughter went shopping and bought the doll her little girl had been wanting. They agreed that the doll would stay with Mom until after trick or treating was over, and then the collected candy would be exchanged for it. This worked beautifully. The evening was exciting and fun, and the child gladly handed over the candy for her new toy.

Another family has a system where their youngster can accumulate “credits” for turning down unapproved foods. When he earns a certain number, he gets to spend a small amount of money at one of the everything-costs-a-dollar stores found at many shopping malls. Eventually, the reward of just feeling and functioning better will be sufficient.

Junior high and high school

By the time he has reached the teen years, how many people have told your son he “could do it if he really tried?” How many years has he been blamed for something over which he may not have had any control? How

Why Can't My Child Behave?

many solutions have been tried and failed? It's no wonder both of you are discouraged!

Imagine how you would feel if you found yourself in a graduate class of quantum physics and the authority figures kept telling you, "you're really very bright. If you can't understand this it's just because you're lazy; you're not really trying."

Imagine a job where your boss belittles you in front of your colleagues, and no matter how hard you try your work never measures up. Then imagine you have no recourse; you cannot quit and find a different boss any more than your child could quit and find a different teacher. (And imagine what it must be like to be a teacher attempting to work with a child who wears one's patience thin!) In addition to all these negative experiences, add the teen's natural desire to be just like his peers. Where is his self-esteem? (*What* self-esteem?)

You know your child better than anyone else. Maybe a straightforward "let's try it" approach will work; that's fine. Some families find it works best to make a contract. The child agrees to give the program a 100% effort for a set number of weeks and see if he feels/behaves any differently. If he sticks to his part of the bargain, and there is no change, Mom agrees to stop bugging him about what he eats (although she may opt to continue to buy wholesome foods). Or, the reward may be a tangible thing -- whatever fits best with your family's attitudes.

But if you suspect your teenager will see the Feingold program as just one more gimmick that won't work, just one more proof that he's a "misfit," then you may want to take an approach that is very different from what we generally suggest.

Ignore your teen

Take a closer look at the list of symptoms in the first section of this book, especially those that apply to adults. Do you see anything that sounds like symptoms *you* may have? Do you find yourself dealing with any of these: headaches, hives, asthma, impatience, distractibility, irritability, allergies, sleep disorders, or nasal congestion? Do you find you have difficulty tolerating fragrances, cigarette smoke, new carpeting or auto exhaust fumes? If any of these symptoms sound familiar, you're a candidate for the Feingold Program yourself. On the other hand, if you feel great, and are into exercise and good nutrition, then you're likely to want to incorporate many Feingold ideas into your own healthy lifestyle.

Go through the Foodlist and identify the products your family already enjoys. Perhaps the changes won't be as great as you have imagined. When you do the shopping, be sure that only Stage One products come into the house. (Pack the no-nos in a box and seal it, or give them away.)

Why Can't My Child Behave?

When your teen wonders what's going on you can tell him it's your own health kick -- it won't be the first time your offspring suspects Mom or Dad has really "lost it."

Be liberal about stocking up on the snacks and treats, and this "Feingold thing" may not seem like a bad idea after all. If your teen is a male, he will probably consume enormous amounts of this Stage One fare, and may find he likes it.

The goal is to see if you can notice any improvements even though he may not be following the program 100%. If your youngster is extremely sensitive, you might not see any response. While we generally discourage families from using the program less than 100%, we know that even the poorly designed studies conducted back in the 1970's showed noticeable improvements in many children. If your teen does improve, you have laid the groundwork for him to eventually make the connection. If a partial change in diet doesn't help, then your teen can't say he tried the Feingold diet, and at least you haven't soured him to the whole idea and closed the door to him considering it in the future. (Refer to the section in this book on teens.)

Negative Vibes

Many people are aware that there is such a thing as "diet" to treat behavior or learning problems; they may even have made an attempt to use one and found the experience very frustrating. The problem we encounter is the assumption that there is only one such diet, but this is not the case. Some books tell you to eliminate sugar; others have you do all your shopping in a health food store; some advocate adding vitamins and minerals; others remove foods such as milk and wheat while they toss in some vague advice about not consuming "additives." Some books tell you what menus to serve, and provide recipes, while others give a listing of which additives the authors consider undesirable.

The experienced Feingold member who has successfully used our program, and investigates other options, knows each of these techniques has validity for some people. But as an initial approach to diet management, they tend to be less comprehensive and more difficult than is necessary. It doesn't matter how good a program is if your child will not cooperate or if you cannot cope with the demands it places on you.

If your doctor is not enthusiastic about the Feingold program, he or she may believe that it is a blend of some of the other approaches named above. Or, he may have read Dr. Feingold's book, *Why Your Child is Hyperactive* and believe the diet is still difficult to follow. He may not realize the wealth of information and help which has been developed since its publication in 1975.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Contact a Feingold Association to receive information on the research supporting diet management, or share some of the scientific information in this book with your doctor. (Feel free to photocopy it.) Also, refer to the section of this book on gaining your doctor's cooperation.

Feingold volunteers have successfully helped the majority of families who have used the Program. Parents and professionals in the United States and around the world continue to volunteer their time and effort for only one reason. It works.

Candy!

Gaining your child's cooperation is an essential part of the Feingold Program, and this often translates to: candy. If your kids are accustomed to having some of the sweet stuff, this is no time to take it away. If they haven't had much of it, you will still need to know what brands are OK for those times when it's hard to avoid. (For the occasional child who is extremely sensitive to sweets, you'll have to get more creative about treats. For the rest of us, just avoid giving the child candy on an empty stomach.)

How do I actually begin the Program?

If you're the parent of an "impossible" child, and you've come this far, you're a survivor. You'll be able to survive some dietary changes too.

The first thing you'll need is that rare, precious commodity -- a little time to yourself! Read the *Feingold Handbook* for a good overview of the Program. Scan your Foodlist and see how many of the products are familiar. You may want to take a marker and highlight all the brand name foods you are already using, as well as any that look appealing to you. (Ignore the unappealing ones. If carrot juice doesn't strike your fancy, it's not something you have to drink; it just means someone once asked us to research it. That person may feel the same way about finding beer on the Foodlist!)

Explore your pantry

Go through the foods you have on hand, and compare them to the products listed in your Feingold literature. Then, using your Foodlist book, make up a shopping list of staples you want to replace. Next, plan some meals for the coming week. You'll find suggestions in your Feingold membership literature and in the *Feingold Cookbook*, but your best source is your family's preferences.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Born chef or convenience food fancier?

If you are an epicure with no budget to get in your way, and you adore cooking, tomorrow night's dinner could be: crab bisque, bibb lettuce salad with hearts of palm, Cornish game hens and chestnut stuffing, glazed tiny carrots, asparagus Hollandaise, to be followed by lemon sorbet and chocolate wafers.

But if you're more typical of the Feingold mom, dinner may be a faster, more casual one: grilled cheese sandwich and Stage One supermarket salad, with a scoop of ice cream for dessert. In other words, make life as easy as possible for yourself. Don't invite anyone over for dinner, except perhaps the kid next door. Julia Child and the relatives can wait for their invitation.

Your old standbys

See how many family favorites can be adapted to Stage One. Stuffed green peppers, baked in tomato sauce will be difficult to transform into Stage One fare, but you may find the meatloaf won't change that much by leaving out the tablespoon of ketchup and using an approved brand of cereal in place of the brand you now have.

The key to shopping and cooking during the first part of the Feingold Program is to focus on the short term. Come up with five different dinners you think the troops would like. If you can think of seven dinner ideas, so much the better. That way, there will be a different dish each night. What to do when you've reached the end of the week and run out of menus? Go back to number one and start again. Our careful research confirms that no husband ever died from eating baked chicken two times in ten days. As far as the kids are concerned, many mothers believe that taste buds don't actually develop until about age 21. Anyway, kids are notorious for wanting the same foods over and over, so don't waste your sympathy.

What now?

So we've offered reassurance and some words of encouragement, but there are still empty spaces on your legal pad waiting to be filled with something to prepare for dinner. Let's face it, grocery shopping and food preparation is not your thing; you'd rather be doing practically anything else. In that case, let's make it as easy for you as possible.

Begin by tossing out your notion of what "dinner" has to be. Maybe nobody will object to a tuna sandwich and carrot sticks. Vary the tuna salad by adding chopped hard cooked eggs. Or make chicken salad by opening a can of (approved brand) chicken in place of a can of tuna. Stick one of those toothpicks with the frilly colored cellophane into each sandwich and everyone will think they're being treated royally. You may be willing to let the kids eat their hamburgers in front of the TV

Why Can't My Child Behave?

occasionally. For variety, use French bread slices or pita in place of regular bread.

The sincerest form of flattery

If your offspring love the fish fillet sandwich at the local fast food dive, they might also go for your version made with approved brand fish fillet, lettuce, and approved brand ranch dressing.

Unbreaded fillet of chicken sandwiches can be imitated by marinating fillets/slices of uncooked chicken or turkey in Italian salad dressing. They cook quickly in a frying pan. Or, you can serve them as a main dish, along with thin (fast cooking) noodles. Cook the noodles according to package directions. After the meat is done, remove the fillets from the pan. Add some water to the drippings. Put the cooked noodles into the pan and toss to coat them with the drippings. Add a salad or vegetable for a meal that tastes like it took a lot of work.

Time warps

Who says breakfast can't be eaten at 6:30 p.m.? You might not mind scrambling eggs. Better yet, your spouse may claim immortality from his mushroom omelet and be willing to cook one occasionally. Pancakes, French toast, and (approved brand) frozen waffles are fair game too.

How many diets can you do at one time?

By all means, try to limit it to one! If you don't love to cook, trying to combine Feingold + gourmet is a bad idea. The same is true for Feingold + other diets.

Allergies: If you believe your child has a food allergy, or are following the advice of your doctor, you may have no other choice. But otherwise, don't try to combine your Feingold cooking with no-dairy, or no-wheat or no-sugar, etc. Life is already hard enough. Once you get into the swing of Feingold cooking you will be able to consider possible allergies, and making some more changes in the kitchen won't seem overwhelming. For now, your goal is to deal with Stage One.

Cholesterol: Here again, if you can safely put aside your concerns about limiting cholesterol for just a few weeks, do so. Once you have become comfortable with the Feingold routine, it won't seem so hard to make other adjustments. (This is the voice of Experience speaking here.)

Sugars: We're not saying that sugar is great stuff (that's the job of the confectioner's lobby). We don't even believe that other sweeteners are desirable. But your first job is to convince your child that he won't miss

Why Can't My Child Behave?

out on too much by cooperating with the Feingold Program. If that means more goodies than you would normally provide, but it succeeds in gaining his cooperation, it's worth losing the battle to win the war. Later, once things are going well, you can cut back on the junk food. Since you will probably be dealing with a far more cooperative child by that time, it may not be so hard.

The other meals

Breakfast is a problem if you are fond of a bowl of colored marshmallows floating in milk. But take a close look at the cereal section of your Foodlist. Not only are there a few familiar ready-to-eat products, but at least one provides as much sugar as any other kid on the block is getting for breakfast. (When you use sugary cereal, try mixing it with bland varieties. Your dentist will thank you.)

If your young'uns like hot cereal, the problem of breakfast is solved, and if you use a microwave oven to cook them in, your clean-up problems are taken care of too.

Health food stores have many varieties of ready-to-eat cereals, but you'll have to test them out as some taste different than supermarket brands. (Some taste better than mainstream brands, while others taste as good as the box they're packed in.)

Have you given serious consideration to the old time breakfast fare? Scrambled eggs, French toast, pancakes, waffles, sausage and biscuits? The French toast, pancakes and waffles can be made in quantity and frozen. (As this book goes to press, there are some varieties of familiar name brand frozen waffles in the Foodlists.)

- You can't get much quicker than bagels or toast. Spread them with cream cheese or peanut butter (or a combination of the two plus a little honey...good!)
- Melt a slice of cheese on a piece of bread...hot breakfast!
- In place of orange juice, try diluted pineapple or pear juice. (Pear juice is available in large bottles, found in the baby food section of your supermarkets. It looks and tastes like apple juice.) If your child likes grapefruit juice, that's another choice. If he doesn't like it, can you change his mind by adding some sugar?
- A breakfast shake will feed two regular sized children or one teenager. Pour the following into a blender: 1-cup whole milk, 1-cup pineapple juice, 1 banana. Whirl to blend. Serve and await the compliments.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

This is a thick stick-to-the-ribs kind of a drink, and contains a good selection of vitamins and protein in a glass.

Forget the five or seven different meal plans we discussed for dinner. With your kids' breakfast all you will need are two or three.

Plan a repertoire for lunches too

Remember, most kids are monotonous by nature, so don't feel guilty if you serve peanut butter sandwiches frequently. Give the impression of variety by cutting the sandwich a different way. A little deception is nothing to be ashamed of if it produces well nourished children or contributes to maternal mental health.

Check out the recipe book provided by the Association, for some more breakfast and lunch ideas.

Juggle the meals to get more variety. There's nothing inherently wrong with a child having macaroni and cheese, or a piece of pot roast at 7:00 am. We know of one child who ate baked beans for breakfast and grew up to be perfectly normal.

Leftovers from last night's dinner can travel to school in your child's lunchbox, and are a treat compared to most school lunches.

Need more help?

Still having trouble thinking of foods that are OK to use on Stage One? Lest you find yourself in a "What's left to eat?" frame of mind, we've listed some of the things that qualify for Stage One.

For processed foods of all types, use only those brands that are found on a current version of the Feingold Foodlist:

Artichokes	Cantaloupe	Crabmeat (real)
Asparagus	Carrots	Crackers
Avocado	Cashew nuts	Cream
Bagels	Celery	Cream Cheese
Bamboo shoots	Cereal	Dates
Banana	Cheese	Eggs
Barley	Chicken	Eggplant
Beans	Chinese vegetables	English muffins
Beef	Chips	Figs
Beets	Chives	Fish
Biscuits	Chocolate	Flour (white & whole wheat)
Bread	Cocoa	Garlic
Broccoli	Coconut	Gelatin
Butter	Cookies	Grains
Cabbage	Corn	Granola
Cake	Cornmeal	Grapefruit
Candy	Cornstarch	

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Hamburger patty	Pears	Shrimp
Honey	Peas	Soda
Honeydew melon	Pecans	Sorbets
Hot dogs	Pepper (black, white)	Soy sauce
Ice cream	Pie	Soup
Jam & jelly	Pineapple	Sour cream
Kiwi	Pistachio nuts	Spinach
Lamb	Pita bread	Squash
Lemon & lime	Pomegranate	Steak
Lettuce	Popcorn	String beans
Lobster	Pork	Sugar
Macaroni	Potatoes (undyed)	Sweet potatoes
Mango	Pretzels	Syrup
Mayonnaise	Pudding	Toast
Milk	Pumpkin	Tuna
Molasses	Radishes	Turkey
Muffins	Roast beef	Veal
Mushrooms	Rice	Vegetable oil
Mustard	Rice cakes	Vinegar (white)
Noodles	Rolls	Waffles
Oatmeal	Salad	Walnuts
Oats	Salad dressing	Water chestnuts
Olives	Salmon	Watercress
Olive oil	Salt	Watermelon
Onions	Sausage	Yams
Pancakes	Scallions	Yeast
Papaya	Seafood	Yogurt
Pasta	Seeds	Zucchini
Peanuts	Sherbet	
Peanut butter	Shortening	

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Your membership packet will also include a recipe book to help you prepare fast, salicylate-free meals, beverages and desserts. Here's a sample.

Dinner in a hurry

"Going Feingold" does not mean you have to give up the convenience you may have enjoyed from boxed dinner mixes. Here are two recipes that are easy, economical, and good tasting. They can be prepared in about 30 minutes or less from ingredients you pick up on your way home.

The shrimp dinner cooks in only one large saucepan, and the stew needs just a saucepan and large frying pan. (I hope you like them; someone's husband ate a lot of experiments so you could have them.)

Shrimp, Broccoli & Fettuccini Alfredo

This elegant dish may fool your family and friends into thinking you've gone gourmet. It's both easy and economical since it takes only a half-pound of shrimp to make 4 servings. Or you can make it with cooked diced chicken (your own or canned). If you do, skip the instructions on preparing shrimp, and add the chicken after the sauce has been cooked.

1/2 pound raw shrimp (shelled and cleaned)
2 cups broccoli florets (from the salad bar if you like)
8 ounces fettuccini or noodles
1 cup whole milk
1 - 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 tsp. garlic salt
dash pepper
2 Tbsp. butter

1. Fill a large saucepan half full of water and add a tablespoon vegetable oil to prevent the pasta from sticking. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. While the water is heating, assemble the other ingredients and have a colander or large strainer ready.

2. When the water boils, add the pasta and stir it. Determine how long the pasta will need to cook, and add two minutes to the cooking time since the water will cool down as you add other ingredients. If the pasta takes 12 minutes, for example, set a timer for 14 minutes.

3. Cook the pasta on medium high heat, stirring it occasionally.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

Meanwhile, measure the milk into a large measuring cup. Add the cornstarch and blend. (A small whisk works well.) Next, stir in the Parmesan cheese, garlic salt and pepper into the milk mixture.

4. When the timer indicates only 4 minutes left for the pasta to cook, add the broccoli pieces to the boiling water.

One minute before this is finished cooking, add the raw shrimp.

When the time is up, pour the pasta/broccoli/shrimp into a colander and allow the water to drain into the sink. Put the lid from the saucepan over this to keep the food warm while you make the Alfredo sauce.

5. Put the milk mixture, along with the 2 Tbsp. of butter, into the empty saucepan, and stir constantly over medium high heat. (A large whisk is good here.) As soon as the mixture thickens, remove it from the heat.

6. Add the pasta combination back into the saucepan, and gently toss it to coat it with the sauce.

Easy Beef Stew

This inexpensive meal provides a great way to use up whatever veggies, pasta, or grains you may have in the refrigerator. Choose your family's favorite ingredients, or try this version.

1 pound ground beef

1 cup (raw) macaroni or other pasta

1 can (about 15 ounces) beans - such as pinto, kidney, navy, etc.

1 can mixed vegetables, drained (or use frozen vegetables)

1 cup water

3 Tbsp. cornstarch

3 Tbsp. soy sauce

dash of garlic powder

1. Fill a medium or large saucepan half full of water; add a spoonful of vegetable oil to prevent the macaroni from sticking.

2. While the water heats up, begin cooking the ground beef in a large frying pan, breaking it up.

3. Cook the macaroni as the package directs. (If you use frozen vegetables, add them to the boiling water about three minutes before the macaroni has completed cooking.)

Why Can't My Child Behave?

4. While the beef and macaroni are cooking, blend the water, cornstarch, soy sauce and garlic powder in a large measuring cup.
5. Drain the macaroni when it is cooked. Spoon off excess fat from the ground beef.
6. Add the soy sauce mixture to the beef and stir, cooking, until the gravy thickens. Add the macaroni, vegetables, and beans to the meat in the frying pan; stir.

This amount should serve at least six people.

A mom writes:

“For those of you just getting started on the Feingold program, let me share some of my feelings. I was really scared of this ‘Feingold thing,’ convinced that it would turn my life upside down. But it's all been so incredibly easy, and we really don't eat any differently than we did before.

“It helps that I don't mind cooking, but the big problem is that my work day is so long I have little time to do it during the week. I leave the house at 6:30 each morning, have a one hour commute, and don't return home until about 6:30 in the evening.

“I prepare many things ahead of time, and it's amazing how simple it is to do. One recipe that works very well is to coat chicken pieces with flour and seasonings in the evening. I put this in a baking pan and put it in the refrigerator. The next day when my husband comes home from work all he has to do is turn on the oven and put in the pan.

“Another easy favorite is Shish Kebab. I cut beef into large pieces and marinade it in teriyaki sauce for several hours or overnight. (Combine 1/2 cup soy sauce, 1/4 cup sugar, 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil, 1/4 tsp. ground ginger and a dash of garlic powder.) Then I put the meat on skewers, along with onions, mushrooms, etc. In the warm months we enjoy it over the grill, and other times of the year we use the oven broiler. It cooks quickly and is always a treat.

“On the weekend I cook large quantities of some of our favorites, then put portions in Ziploc bags, and freeze these. This works well for scalloped potatoes. I make a white sauce base, add some cut up mushrooms, add sliced raw potatoes and some onion. I cook this 2/3 of the way, then cool it somewhat and put portions in the Ziploc bags. Flatten them out and freeze them. The morning I plan to use it, I take one of the bags of potato out of the freezer and let it thaw. When I get home I cook it the rest of the way.

Why Can't My Child Behave?

“We rearranged the family room furniture so I can see the TV with my family while I cook in quantity about every three weeks. “If you’re new to the Program, hang in there – it’s worth it.”

Stage One -- Keeping a Diet Diary

It will be much easier to successfully use the program if you keep a diary of all the foods your child eats at the start of the program. The Feingold Handbook has a sample diary.

At least once a day, make a brief note of the behaviors you observe. This information can be valuable in the days to come; here’s why. If you see uneven behavior -- good times and not-so-good, the diary can help you to pinpoint the likely culprits. On the other hand, if your child does well, then this list of the foods eaten becomes your “safe” foods. If you notice reactions later on, you can always return to this group of foods and be fairly sure you will be able to once again get these good results.

Before long you will probably be comfortable enough with the program that a diary won’t be needed. If you later investigate possible food allergies, you may want to once again keep track of what is eaten and any behavioral changes that result.

Another benefit of keeping a diary for awhile is that it will help you determine how long it takes for a reaction to occur and how long the reaction is likely to last. For example, if you discover that tomatoes set your child off and the reaction lasts for a day, you may want to plan on the occasional pizza for Friday night so your child will be able to run off some of the excess energy, and be back on track for school Monday morning.