

# AUTISM

## *A Guide to Understanding Autism: What to know and What you can do*

Autism spectrum disorder ("ADD") is a pervasive developmental disorder, which affects cognitive, social, and behavioral skills. It usually begins within the first three years after conception. If caught early, a lot can be done for managing this disorder.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends screening children for autism during regularly schedule doctor visits. When a doctor or parent recognizes a developmental delay, further investigation can be done. There are similar diagnoses that must be ruled out – such as language delays or avoidant personality disorder. Allopathic assessments include behavioral assessments (guidelines and questionnaires) & physical assessments and laboratory tests, including physical exam, hearing tests, and testing for lead poisoning. In addition to these tests, taking a holistic approach can be quite powerful and life changing.

### **Holistic Assessments:**

Stool analysis	Intestinal Permeability
Urinary Organic Acids	EFA Analysis
Elemental Analysis (toxic metals)	Liver Detox Profile
Amino Acid Analysis	Comprehensive Antibody Assessment
Urine Neurotransmitters	Environmental Pollutant Panel

## **Characteristics**

- An abnormal absorption with the self
- Communication & social interaction impairment; lack of response to people
- Short attention span
- Restricted and repetitive behaviors
- Lack of smiles and/or joyful expressions.

## **Autism Stats**

- Autism now affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys
- Autism prevalence figures are growing
- Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S.
- Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average
- Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to have autism



## Important Nutrients for Managing Autism

### Key Nutrients

**Dietary Fiber:** Fiber keeps you feeling full & plays a key role in digestion. Getting a mix of **soluble fiber** (apples, bananas, pears, beans & nuts) and **insoluble fiber** (carrots, celery, dark leafy greens & bulgur) helps keep cholesterol levels optimal, aids in the removal of toxins and supports bowel health. **Aim for 20-40 grams/day** (Bauman, 2013).

**Essential Fatty Acids:** Maintaining a healthy Omega 3-6 ratio is incredibly important in combatting inflammation, which leads to advanced disease and worsening conditions in the body. The ideal ratio is 3:1 or 4:1 omega-6 to omega-3. (Bauman, 2013) Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish (salmon), shellfish and flaxseeds. Foods with the highest percent of calories from omega-6 fatty acids and which may want to be limited/avoided are grapeseed oil, corn oil, walnuts, sesame oil, peanut butter and pistachios. Foods lower in omega-6 fatty acids include coconut oil, (raw) milk, (organic, grass-fed) meat, macadamia nuts, rice, cream, carrots, olives and avocado (Wentz, 2013).

**Probiotics (Non-dairy):** Probiotics promote a healthy gut microbiome. In the latest research on autism, a gut-brain connection has been made. Keeping a healthy gut may reduce uncomfortable characteristics of this condition. Sauerkraut, kombucha, miso, water kefir, coconut kefir and sour pickles are healthy sources of this important nutrient.

## Early Detection is Key Parents play a major role in identifying Autism.

### Tips:

- **Monitor your child's development.** Autism involves a variety of developmental delays, so keeping a close eye on when—or if—your child is hitting the key social, emotional, and cognitive milestones is an effective way to spot the problem early on. While developmental delays don't automatically point to autism, they may indicate a heightened risk.
- **Take action if you're concerned.** Every child develops at a different pace—so you don't need to panic if your child is a little late to talk or walk. When it comes to healthy development, there's a wide range of "normal." But if your child is not meeting the milestones for his or her age, or you suspect a problem, share your concerns with your child's doctor immediately. Don't wait.
- **Don't accept a wait-and-see approach.** Many concerned parents are told, "Don't worry" or "Wait and see." But waiting is the worst thing you can do. You risk losing valuable time at an age where your child has the best chance for improvement. Furthermore, whether the delay is caused by autism or some other factor, developmentally delayed kids are unlikely to simply "grow out" of their problems. In order to develop skills in an area of delay, your child needs extra help and targeted treatment.
- **Trust your instincts.** Ideally, your child's doctor will take your concerns seriously and perform a thorough evaluation for autism or other developmental delays. But sometimes, even well-meaning doctors miss red flags or underestimate problems. Listen to your gut if it's telling you something is wrong and be persistent. Schedule a follow-up appointment with the doctor, seek a second opinion, or ask for a referral to a child development specialist.