

Four Must-Have Supplements for Autism

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Individuals with autism have been shown to have numerous nutrient deficiencies. These deficiencies can be uncovered during a detailed nutrition assessment using a symptom based approach as well as laboratory testing when needed. Based on findings, an individualized supplement protocol should be developed for each child. Common symptoms that improve during targeted nutrient repletion include more comfortable stools, better sleep patterns, increased speech, better focus, and a more calm demeanor. Until an individualized nutrition assessment can be obtained by an experienced practitioner, parents may want to begin investigating the following supplement "must-haves" for their child.

Spectrum Specific Multivitamin

A multivitamin and mineral supplement specifically designed for autism is a great place to begin supplementing. These formulas generally contain a generous dose of B vitamins, zinc, and a variety of other vital micro-nutrients. Providing the building blocks for our bodies' most essential functions is especially important for those with a picky or limited diet.

Probiotics

Individuals with autism have been

shown to have an imbalance of good bacteria in the digestive tract, also known as dysbiosis. Dysbiosis can lead to gastro-intestinal (GI) inflammation, nutrient deficiencies, and uncomfortable or abnormal stools. Probiotics, or "good bacteria", have been shown in multiple studies to help repopulate the GI microworld back to a more normal balance. For children over the age of one, opt for a multi-strain, refrigerated probiotic. Please consult with an experienced practitioner for children under the age of one.

Cod Liver Oil

Cod liver oil provides the essential fatty acids EPA and DHA plus natural vitamins A and D. Numerous studies have found great benefit for individuals with autism, as well as ADHD, who supplement with EPA and DHA. Symptoms that often improve with supplemental EPA and DHA include improved social interaction, better attention, and less aggression.

Magnesium

Magnesium is a mineral required to fuel more than 300 biochemical reactions within the body, including protein synthesis, blood glucose control, muscle and nerve function, and blood pressure regulation. Often used to soften difficult-to-pass stools, magnesium can also aid in calming



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and decreasing the time it takes to fall asleep. It is important to understand the stool changing properties of the various types of magnesium before choosing a magnesium supplement.

When considering supplements, parents are encouraged to consider only manufacturers who are third-party tested for potency and purity. If you are interested in starting a targeted supplement regimen for your child, or have tried a supplement protocol with varied results, it is recommended to consult with a practitioner implementing the principles of the Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs (MAPS) or an integrative health practitioner experienced in assisting children on the spectrum.