

## The Best Autism Supplements

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Autism is an epidemic. The most recent statistic, courtesy of a study published in *Pediatrics*, states that [one out of 91 children](#) are on the autism spectrum, with one in 58 boys affected.<sup>1</sup> That's almost 2 percent of boys. Compared to one in 15,000 having type 1 diabetes and one in 15,000 having juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, these numbers are staggering. They also seem accurate; most of us have seen autistic children in our practice or know someone with an autistic child.

It's time to take a stand because we all need to do something to help. We need to reverse the process. There are many beneficial ways to help the nervous system, chiropractic being one of them, along with the behavioral and occupational therapies currently being used to treat autism. Nutritional supplements cannot be overlooked. There is an imbalance in chemistry inside the bodies of these children. An overactive nervous system burns through nutrients. A poor diet just adds to the vicious cycle of symptoms.

Here is the list of the most important supplements to use. I encourage you to use nutritional supplements with all your child patients, but particularly autistic children.

Digestive enzymes: A [study of 36 autistic children](#) using endoscopic procedures revealed esophagitis, gastritis and duodenitis. Limited carbohydrate enzyme activity was reported in over half of the children. Give them digestive enzymes with every meal.<sup>2</sup>

Fish oil: Our brain is made of healthy fats. A study reported that giving 1.5 g of fish oil to autistic children led to a [reduction in hyperactivity, tantrums and aggression](#), as compared to placebo. I give 2 g or more to all children.<sup>3</sup>

Magnesium and vitamin B6: These nutrients have been used the longest for autism, with [good effect](#). They improve social interactions, communication, restricted behavior and delayed functioning. I use a supplement with a sweet taste palatable to most children.<sup>4</sup>

Vitamin B12: This vitamin is becoming very popular, especially as a 1,000 mcg IM injection. In addition to helping neurochemistry, it [increases glutathione antioxidant status](#).<sup>5</sup>

Folate: Another enzyme [important for neurochemistry function](#), the methylated folate (5-MTHF) is indicated in autism. The methylating enzyme, dihydrofolate reductase, can be inhibited in autism.<sup>6</sup>

Zinc: Wonderful for the immune system, zinc also balances copper in the body. The copper level in autistic children is usually high, and [can be removed with supplemental zinc](#).<sup>7</sup>

Antioxidants: [Inflammation causes oxidation](#), which destroys the body, even the neurons. Most children with autism have decreased antioxidant levels. A plethora of antioxidants are available, including A, C, E, Se, Zn, CoQ<sub>10</sub>, ALA, glutathione and NAC.<sup>8</sup>

Amino acids: These building blocks of protein are essential to neurotransmitter production, along with a myriad of other body functions. Different children have abnormal values of different amino acids. I create custom amino powders based on the child's individual amino-acid test results. While they most commonly need 5-HTP, taurine, theanine and gamma-aminobutyric acid, other amino acids may be indicated.<sup>9-11</sup>

All of these supplements work wonders at improving the symptoms of children on the autism spectrum. The big issue is compliance. Some supplements taste bad, while other children have specific tastes. Here's what I've learned over the years from my work with children.

*Look for a combination formula.* A mild-tasting combination supplement that has the majority of the above nutrients including B<sub>6</sub>, folate, B<sub>12</sub>, magnesium, zinc, 5-HTP, taurine, theanine and TMG may help maximize compliance.

*Keep their bowels moving.* Constipation is no one's friend. Mineral oil, topical castor oil and magnesium are all great alternatives to laxatives.

*Invent new ways to take supplements.* Applesauce and yogurt are old standards to sneak supplements into children. Try making popsicles or Jell-O in an ice cube tray, and dosing the supplements that way.

*Introduce things one at a time.* Adverse reactions are uncommon but possible. Give three to four days for each supplement to see how the child tolerates it.

*Have patience.* I wish we could flip a switch and these children would instantly be better, but it doesn't work that way. We need years of every therapy, internal and external, to help these children fulfill their optimal potential. Make sure the families understand this is a journey of a thousand steps, but improvements will be seen along the way. I ask parents to take monthly videos because we forget what last month or last year was like. I promise, you will see a difference. Good luck.

## References

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