

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

*Autism, High Functioning Autism,  
Pervasive Developmental Delay (PDD), Asperger's Syndrome*

Not so many years ago, autism was a rare disorder, affecting **3 in 10,000** children. In 1997, the Autism Society of America reported that autism occurred in approximately **1 of every 500** births, the symptoms usually becoming apparent during the first three years of life. This was already, at that time, considered an epidemic.

In 2006, however – less than 10 years later – the Centers for Disease Control acknowledged that **1 in 150** children in the U.S. is autistic. In July, 2007, British researchers confirmed that the rate of autism in Great Britain has risen to **1 in 58**. Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability today.

Much of the ongoing research is devoted to discovering a genetic predisposition for autism. It is worth keeping in mind, however, that it is simply impossible to have an epidemic – and this IS an epidemic – of a genetic disorder unless gene variations that were harmless for centuries have now suddenly been impacted by some change in the environment.<sup>1,2</sup>

A growing body of evidence suggests that observable symptoms of autism are linked to biochemical intolerances, allergies, or metabolic errors. It is believed that foods and environmental factors play a major role. One of the environmental changes causing much controversy is the increase in vaccine exposure. According to the National Vaccine Information Center,<sup>3</sup> safety research on these vaccines is deficient, and the vaccines themselves certainly contain enough chemical toxins to pose a problem for any babies who may (genetically) have difficulty dealing with them.

Research studies underway in England, Norway, and the United States are investigating biochemical processes and genetic errors in patients with autism. These include gluten and casein intolerance, phenol-sulfotransferase (PST) deficiency, and others. Hopefully, research will soon reveal methods to detect those children at risk, to protect them before they become autistic.

Many families have reported that symptoms of autism improve by using the Feingold Program alone or in combination with a gluten-free, casein-free (GFCF) diet. Some Feingold members find their ADHD

children also benefit from the GFCF Diet, and some medical professionals now put ADHD at the “mild end” of what they are calling Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

One very impressive nonprofit organiza-

tion is the Autism Research Institute (ARI) headed by the late Dr. Bernard Rimland, who first recognized autism as a biological disorder rather than a mental illness.

Since 1967, the ARI has collected data from more than 18,500 parents of autistic children. They ask parents to rate the interventions they have used for their children. More than 40 drugs have been rated, from Adderall to Zoloft, as well as 26 supplements and 9 dietary variations.

Overall, the supplements and diets show higher success rates than the medications. The rate of negative responses (getting worse), moreover, is much higher for medications than for the other treatments.

The most successful diet is the GFCF Diet (65%), followed by the Candida Diet (54%) and the Feingold Diet (53%); the best rated non-drug treatment is Chelation (76%); the best rated supplements are Vitamin B12 (63%) and Melatonin (61%); and the best rated drugs are Diflucan (55%), Nystatin (49%), Risperidal (54%), and Secretin IV (48%).

## Web sites worth visiting:

- [www.autismNDI.com](http://www.autismNDI.com) - *Autism Network for Dietary Intervention*
- [www.autismwebsite.com/ari](http://www.autismwebsite.com/ari) - *Autism Research Institute*
- [www.autismwebsite.com/ari/treatment/form34q.htm](http://www.autismwebsite.com/ari/treatment/form34q.htm) - *Parent Ratings of Biomedical Interventions*
- [www.gfcfdiet.com](http://www.gfcfdiet.com) - *Gluten-Free, Casein-Free Diet*
- [www.diet-studies.com/megson.html](http://www.diet-studies.com/megson.html) - *Mary Megson, MD, at Congressional Committee, April 2000*
- [www.nvic.org](http://www.nvic.org) - *National Vaccine Information Center*

1. This is clearly illustrated by hunter-gatherer tribes who rarely suffered from diabetes until they adopted the Western diet and culture which they were not genetically able to tolerate. Almost immediately, they developed an “epidemic” of diabetes afflicting up to 50% of their population.

2. Pima Indians, Genetic Research  
[www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/pima/genetic/genetic.htm](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/pima/genetic/genetic.htm)

3. National Vaccine Center - [www.NVIC.org](http://www.NVIC.org)