



Autism Spectrum Disorder



What Is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder is a [developmental disorder](#) characterized by impairments in [sensory](#), [language](#), social, [emotional and behavior areas](#). It is a “spectrum disorder,” with manifestations ranging from mild to severe.

What Your Doctor May

Tell You About Autism

Traditional practitioners believe that autism is a mystery. They may say that, “We have little knowledge of possible causes, and that treatments should address impairments in the processing of touch, movement, audition and vision, speech, language, and behavior. Accompanying physical issues such as [allergies](#), [breathing problems](#), [gastrointestinal issues](#), and others are unrelated to the diagnosis.”

Another Way to Think About Autism

Autism spectrum disorder is a multi-system developmental disorder caused by an accumulation of [environmental stressors](#) turning on a [genetically susceptible predisposition](#) to the condition. Just like a bridge that collapses when a heavily laden truck crosses it, the body collapses into autism as the multiple triggers add up. Depending upon the triggers, different systems are affected in each individual, related to his/her bioindividuality.

Autism can be related to:

- [Visual processing](#)
- [Auditory processing](#)
- [Sensory processing](#)
- [Retained primitive reflexes](#)
- [Food sensitivities and intolerances](#)
- [A neurotransmitter imbalance](#)
- [Environmental toxins such as lead](#)
- [Gut dysbiosis](#)
- [Immune dysregulation](#)

The good news is that [you can heal the symptoms](#) of autism by rebalancing the body and bringing it back to health. This requires removing the possible triggers from the external and internal environment, and adding necessary nutrients through food and supplementation.

Autism, ADD/ADHD and SPD Comorbidities

Knowledgeable practitioners have found that roughly 30-50% of children with autism, [ADD/ADHD](#) and [Sensory Processing Disorder \(SPD\)](#) also have [PANS PANDAS](#). These are newer diagnoses that your child's pediatrician or psychiatrist may not be aware of. They are disorders that are loosely defined as a sudden onset of acute anxiety and mood variability accompanied by OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and/or tics.

PANDAS stands for Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections. With PANDAS, the onset of symptoms is typically preceded by *streptococcal -A* infection ("strep throat"). However, in some cases, children may not have presented with a full-blown, acute strep throat infection.

PANDAS is included in the larger umbrella of PANS, Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome. PANS includes not only PANDAS, but also diagnoses such as [Lyme disease](#), OCD and ODD. In addition, it is very common for younger siblings of children diagnosed with autism, ADD/ADHD or Sensory Processing Disorder to be diagnosed themselves with PANS and PANDAS.

If this is the case, consider that your older child may have PANS PANDAS as well. In many cases, these children have both a PANDAS diagnosis as well as that of Lyme disease.

Autoimmune Encephalitis

Another way to think of PANS PANDAS, as well as any neurodevelopmental disorder such as autism, ADD/ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder and even [learning disabilities](#), is that these disorders may fall under the larger umbrella of autoimmune encephalitis (AE). This is a disorder in which the immune system

attacks the brain, impairing function.

Encephalitis is [inflammation](#) and swelling of the brain, often due to infection, which in many of these cases causes an autoimmune attack on the microglia cells of the brain. A child with this type of damage may typically never have or may lose motor skills and/or the ability to speak, similar to an adult who has had a stroke.

Encephalitis is a common symptom of this type of damage, and it often shows up as an increase in the child's head-circumference percentile, especially in the first year of life. The prestigious science journal *Nature* [pointed this out](#) by stating that “brain volume overgrowth was linked to the emergence and severity of autistic social deficits.”

Anti-NDMA Receptor Encephalitis

The N-methyl-D-aspartate receptor (also known as the NMDA receptor), is a glutamate receptor found in nerve cells. It is activated when the amino acids glutamate and glycine bind to it. NMDA receptors have been implicated by a number of studies to be strongly involved with excitotoxicity, the process by which nerve cells are damaged or killed by excessive stimulation by neurotransmitters such as glutamate. Excitotoxicity can cause encephalopathy and [seizures](#).

[Glutamate](#) and its analogs are found in processed foods not only as MSG (monosodium glutamate), but also in chemical food additives such as:

- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein
- Soy protein isolate
- Yeast extract
- Gelatin
- Barley malt
- Bouillon
- Natural flavoring
- Artificial flavoring
- Soy sauce

Even natural foods such as tomatoes, bone broth and seaweed may naturally have high levels of glutamate. Strep also increases glutamate in the brain.

Autism Healing Checklist

- Have your child screened for services from the local public school, even if your child does not attend. The law mandates that you are entitled to free services from birth.
- Seek out a local support group for families of children with special needs.

Make Lifestyle Changes

Get a good night's sleep

Get outside every day

Get an hour of exercise or movement per day

Sync circadian rhythm by getting up when the sun does and going to bed after it sets



Limit screen time as much as possible



Use blue-blocking lightbulbs and glasses at night, especially when looking at screens

Put bare feet in wet ground when possible

Drink half body weight in ounces of water

[Learn More](#)

Still Looking for Answers?

Visit the [Epidemic Answers Practitioner Directory](#) to find a practitioner near you.

Join us inside our online membership community for parents, [Healing Together](#), where you'll find even more healing resources, expert guidance, and a community to support you every step of your child's healing journey.

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