

NATUROPATHS Help Heal Autism

Healthier Ways to Manage Spectrum Disorders

by Cathy A. Picard

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) currently affect one in 68 families in the U.S. according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which also states, "There are no medications that can cure ASD or treat the core symptoms." While this is true, when obstacles are identified and targeted support is given, there is hope for healing.

Autism is a systemic inflammatory disorder that manifests as a result of combined factors that create nervous system dysfunction, developmental delay and behavioral concerns. Contributing factors include toxic or infectious exposure in utero and early childhood, genetic variances, intestinal inflammation and immune imbalance. These all affect the nervous system during a period sensitive for brain development.

When stressed and dysfunctional body systems are brought back into balance using natural therapies, symptoms of ASD improve and in some cases, disappear completely.

Types of treatment that a naturopathic doctor may employ in the treatment of children with ASD include:

Diet and Nutrition

Ensuring a clean, well-balanced diet reduces exposure to hormones, antibiotics and nervous system-disrupting chemicals. When food sensitivities are identified and removed, gut inflammation is reduced. This often results in the reduction of associated anxiety, restlessness and agitation. Gluten from wheat and other grains, as well as casein from dairy, are two proteins that are aggravating factors in the diets of patients with ASD. Numerous families report marked improvement with the elimination of these foods. Often times the food(s) that



a child craves or eats daily can be an irritant as well.

Nutrient and Herbal Therapy

When genetic variations in metabolism, detoxification capacity and neurotransmitter function are identified, targeted nutrient therapy can correct imbalances. Kids with ASD are often deficient in B complex vitamins, vitamin D, magnesium and zinc. Individual issues in the gastrointestinal tract may be targeted with probiotics, herbal antifungals or antimicrobials and gut healing nutrients.

It is important to use quality products to ensure efficacy. Many natural products sold over the counter are contaminated and contain additives or the wrong forms of nutrients. Internet sites are rife with nutrient fraud. One way to be sure of getting a quality product is to get it from the office of a naturopathic doctor with a medical education.

Homeopathy

Homeopathic remedies are gentle forms of medicine that use tiny amounts of a natural substance to stimulate the

body's innate healing capacity. These remedies may be used to treat certain systems in the body, or the whole person. Homeopathy is safe for patients of all ages and does not interact with other medications.

Drainage and The Brain Protocol

Drainage is a system of energetic medicine wherein complex remedy compounds formulated to stimulate particular organ systems are used to prompt the body to eliminate stored toxicity so that it may self-regulate and heal. The Brain Protocol uses drainage remedies to gently retrain the nervous system. The brain develops in phases, and if there is an interruption in any one phase, future development is compromised. The remedies used in the Brain Protocol re-stimulate areas of the brain to allow each developmental stage to be completed in sequence. The Brain Protocol is useful in healing from ASD as well as other nervous system and developmental challenges.

Every child is as unique as their healing path. Many children with autism from families that have been told there is no treatment for their child have made great gains in communication and learning. They have left pharmaceuticals behind, and some are now even considered "neurotypical". A team-based approach as early as possible often leads to the greatest gains. Other complimentary treatments to consider include craniosacral therapy, biofeedback, whole brain learning activities and other functional therapies. There is always hope for healing.

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