

# FREE Parents Guide

## Use Food and Nutrition To Help Children with Autism



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### Diet for Autism

#### Why and How it Helps

**D**iet is a powerful tool. The choices we make about what to eat and when to eat our children have profound impact on health and present a great opportunity to support healing and recovery from autism.

Some parents hesitate to try autism diets (or protocols are slow to suggest them) because they don't know if they'll "feed" their kids. One recent news report about autism diets suggested uncertainty about their efficacy, asking it was uncertain whether diet helps the symptoms of autism, or whether it helps the gut (which in turn affects a vast number of autistic symptoms). The implication was that since they don't know it's helping - the "autism" or "the gut" - they don't know if it's working at all. This is foolishly don't lose your potential because some experts fail to realize why or how diet works!

As a Certified Nutrition Consultant with experience supporting hundreds of families with children on the autism spectrum, I will explain to you WHY and HOW diet works. This will remove any mystery about diet and get you on the road to recovery.

The common physical symptoms of children with autism include diarrhea, constipation, bloating and IBS (gastrointestinal), weight challenges and inflammation (pain). For many, nutrient deficiencies, imbalanced biochemistry and digestive problems are at the core of these symptoms. These weaknesses in physiological functioning can be directly tied to biochemical processes that are affected by diet - i.e. the absence of requisite nutrients and / or the presence of offending substances. Aligned food choices affect these processes and help improve symptoms.

**WHY DIET HELPS:**  
A WHOLE BODY DISORDER  
Historically, autism was considered a "brain-only" brain disorder, implying that it begins and ends in the brain. Though the array of common physical symptoms observed and the groundbreaking work of the Autism Research Institute, a more appropriate "whole body disorder" (the brain is affected by the biochemistry generated in the body) perspective of autism has emerged. Martha Herbert MD PhD, who was one of the first to describe autism this way, refers to the brain as "downstream" from the body's functioning.

Referring to the chart, Whole Body Disorder, you can see the complete set of factors that influence autism (or the IGD) team, environmental factors, digestive health, and inflammation. The right side includes the effects they can have on the brain. Here's how imbalanced biochemistry affects the brain and the symptoms of autism.

August 2008 - The Autism File

Julie Matthews  
Certified Nutrition Consultant  
NourishingHope.com

# Use Food and Nutrition to Help Children with Autism

## 5-Step Parents Guide, by Julie Matthews

### Part 1: How and Why Diet Helps

Dear Parents and Professionals,

Welcome to Nourishing Hope. Thank you for choosing to read my **Parent's Guide, "Learn How to Use Food and Nutrition to Help Your Child."**

The Parent's Guide comprises five published articles to help you understand WHY children benefit from varied "autism diets," and empower you to be effective with this approach.

1. Why and How Diet Helps Autism
2. Food Allergens, Sensitivities, and Substitutes
3. Focus on a Healthy Diet
4. Fundamentals of Implementing a Special Diet
5. Help for Picky Eaters

I am Certified Nutrition Consultant and specialist in "nutrition intervention" for autism, which comprises deep understanding of biochemistry and the role of food, nutrition, and supplementation in the restoration of health and well-being.

As you embark on this learning, please know that there are ample resources to help you be effective at following any healing diet for autism. My website includes many articles, videos (on YouTube), and be sure to visit my blog as well. My work is respected among autism medical professionals and parents around the world. I'll help you understand, apply, and customize dietary strategies - as there is no "one size fits all" approach for children.

- **Article 1:** Explains the underlying scientific rationale for diet changes, and the focus of nutrition intervention on health and behavior.
- **Article 2:** Explains food allergens and sensitivities common in autism and how to address them
- **Article 3:** Provides an overview of the most effective dietary strategies suggested by doctors and used by parents to help their children.
- **Article 4:** Addresses the practical aspects of following and cooking for a special diet.
- **Article 5:** Helps parents realize that many children with ASD make limited food choices, and gives advice on expanding diet and providing adequate nutrition for picky eaters

Please feel free to REFER others to this Guide - as it may help them understand WHY you are undertaking a strategic and calculated food intake regime (healing diet) for your child.

I'm here to help you and will stay in touch with further helpful information, tools, and special offers from our sponsor/collaborators. You are not alone in this journey.

Welcome, and thank you for nourishing hope! **Here's Step 1:** Why and How Diet Helps Autism –

<http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fnourishinghope.com%2Fresources%2FAutismFileHowDietHelps.pdf> (you may need to CUT and PASTE this link into your web browser)

Sincerely,

Julie Matthews



# Use Food and Nutrition to Help Children with Autism

## 5-Step Parents Guide, by Julie Matthews

### Part 2: Food Allergens, Sensitivities and Substitutes

Dear Parents and Professionals,

Article 1 has provided you an understanding of the reasoning behind and intention of autism diet intervention, i.e. using food and nutrition to help your child.

Because children with ASD commonly have multiple sensitivities or allergies, autism diets involve some restriction. Omitting problematic foods from your child's diet immediately reduces burden on the body, and is the first step forward. Typically, you'll begin by making the diet gluten-free and casein-free, then you may expand to soy-, corn-, and/or egg-free, as well.

Such restriction may cause feelings of overwhelm in parents, as options can seem limited at first. This second article will discuss when, why, and how to avoid common food allergies/sensitivities with autism, and further empower you to take charge of your child's diet.

**Article 2:** Food Allergens, Sensitivities and Substitutes –

<http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fnourishinghope.com%2Fresources%2FAutismFile-FoodSensitivities.pdf> (you may need to CUT and PASTE this link into your web browser)

Thanks for reading my 5-Step Guide.

Sincerely,

Julie Matthews



*Diet for  
Autism*



Food Allergens,  
Sensitivities, & Substitutes

# Use Food and Nutrition to Help Children with Autism

## 5-Step Parents Guide, by Julie Matthews

### Part 3: Focus on Getting Healthy

Dear Parents and Professionals,

Most autism diets are based around "removing" a food or foods from a child's diet. The GFCF diet avoids all gluten and casein; the Specific Carbohydrate Diet removes certain sugars and starches. One of the common misconceptions about autism diets is that they're just about removal, that any food is "fine" as long as it's compliant with the diet. Because of this, people do not pay proper attention to nutrient density, sugar levels, or specific food ingredients.

As you remove foods, you must also "replenish" foods in the diet. With nutrient deficiencies so common for those with autism, particular attention to nutritious foods is vital.

**Article 3:** "Focus on Getting Healthy" provides you an overview of the most effective diets for autism, and their onus, improved health –

<http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2F nourishinghope.com%2Fresources%2FAutismFileASDDiets.pdf> (you may need to CUT and PASTE this link into your web browser)

By now you may be recognizing food related issues. I suggest keeping a food journal to make note of your child's eating patterns; their likes/dislikes and any behavioral, physical, or food sensitivity/allergic reactions. This will help you as you develop an effective diet for your child.

And, look forward to the next article in the Guide.

Sincerely,

Julie Matthews



# *Diet for Autism*

## Focus on Getting Healthy

# Use Food and Nutrition to Help Children with Autism

## 5-Step Parents Guide, by Julie Matthews

### Step 4: Fundamentals of Implementing a Special Diet

Dear Parents and Professionals,

In this Parent's Guide, you're learning how to use food and nutrition to help children with ASD. This entails becoming very strategic about what they eat and making calculated omissions and additions to food choices - i.e., following a special diet.

In the first three steps you've learned: Why dietary intervention helps children with autism, specifics about food sensitivities/allergies and making substitutions, and that adding good nutrition is vital to all autism diets. Now let's explore how to get started.

**Step 4:** The Fundamentals of Implementing a Special Diet. In this article I explain how to begin an autism diet, provide you particular meal planning suggestions for the most common diets, and include **6 initial steps** for successful autism diet implementation - plus much more!

**Access article 4 here:**

<http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A//nourishinghope.com/resources/AutismFile-ImplementingASpecialDiet.pdf> (you may need to CUT and PASTE this link into your web browser)

Next, the closing article in my 5 step guide, Helping Picky Eaters.

Sincerely,

Julie Matthews



Fundamentals of Implementing a Special Diet

# Use Food and Nutrition to Help Children with Autism

## 5-Step Parents Guide, by Julie Matthews

### Step 5: Help for Picky Eaters

Dear Parents and Professionals,

Thank you for choosing to learn how to use food and nutrition to help children with autism. I am deeply committed to sharing evidence based information and experience with you that can make a real difference in the lives of children.

While nourishing hope is deeply steeped in scientific research (serious science), the idea of improving diet and nutrition for someone with compromised physical health is very much common sense - every child benefits. I've seen this first hand as an autism nutrition and diet consultant whose been working one-on-one with hundreds of parents just like you for the past ten years.

By creating this guide for you, it is my hope that you:

- Understand **why** you're following or considering an autism diet (*because autism is a physiological disorder influenced by body chemistry that's affected by food/nutrient choices*),
- Know **how to avoid and replace** the most common food allergens in your child's diet,
- Have learned about **the most effective autism diets** and their focus on promoting health,
- Can apply **specific steps to take charge** of your child's diet and begin GFCF, SCD or another dietary strategy

And finally, because many children with autism are picky eaters, the final article of this Parent's Guide offers help. I explain common influential factors, provide specific steps you can take, and include insight from a feeding therapist too. You can still follow an autism diet with a picky eater.

Dietary intervention is supported by serious science, common sense, and mother's intuition. While each child is unique and individualized attention is required, the underlying rationale for using food and nutrition to HELP is unquestionable.

My work, through NourishingHope.com, my book, cooking programs, blog, published articles, conference or online presentations and webinars, clinician trainings, interviews, personal consultations, and more...is explicitly focused on empowering you to be effective with diet. I hope that you find this Parent's Guide useful and inspiring.

**Step 5** - <http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A//nourishinghope.com/resources/AutismFile-Help4PickyEaters.pdf> (you may need to CUT and PASTE this link into your web browser)

I am committed to supporting you on this journey - thank you for nourishing hope.

Julie Matthews



**Diet for  
Autism**



**Help for Picky Eaters**