

## Complementary and Alternative Medicine Nutritional Supplements

Efficacy Rating  
Level #3 for B6 and Magnesium  
Level #4 for DMG

Families often search for a cause of their child's autism, which may lead to speculation regarding etiologies and the subsequent use of complementary alternative medicine approaches methods of intervention. The desire to cure the child's autism by finding the cause is certainly a strong motivator to parents of diagnosed children.

The use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in children with autism and related disorders may be as high as 60%. Multiple anecdotal and case reports have generated interest in the use of a variety of nutritional supplements to treat children with Autism and related disorders.

Before consideration of any nutrient or vitamin therapy there should be consultation with the child's physician. Also strategies outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics statement on the use of complementary and alternative treatments might be considered.

The use of some nutritional supplements and vitamin therapy in the treatment of autism is addressed in the following excerpts taken from the Quality Standards Subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology and Child Neurology Society.

### **Pyridoxine (Vitamin B 6) and magnesium**

Studies documenting nutritional supplementation with high-dose pyridoxine and magnesium have claimed beneficial effects on the symptoms of ASD but have been criticized for their methodological shortcomings and failure to address the issue of safety of use. Although the only blinded and controlled study showed no adverse effects of high-dose pyridoxine and magnesium, it also demonstrated no differences in behavior of controls or patients who received placebo versus high-dose pyridoxine and magnesium for a 10-week period.

### **Vitamin C or Ascorbic Acid**

One small double-blind, crossover study reported decreased stereotypic behaviors in children who received ascorbic acid.

### **Dimethylglycine**

Although there have been anecdotal reports from Russia that dimethylglycine improved behavior and speech in 15 children, a recent double-blind, placebo-controlled investigation using a low dose of this supplement demonstrated no statistically significant effect on autistic behaviors.

Separating Fact from Fiction in the Etiology and Treatment of Autism: A Scientific Review of the Evidence  
*The Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice*, vol. 1, no. 1 found at  
<http://www.srmhp.org/0101/autism.html>

## Nutritional Supplements & Vitamin Therapy Resources & Information

### Websites:

American Academy of Pediatrics – Policy Statement – Statement of Reaffirmation

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;107/3/598>

American Academy of Pediatrics – Policy Statement – Abstract

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;107/5/1221>

American Academy of Neurology

<http://www.neurology.org/cgi/content/abstract/55/4/468>

Separating Fact from Fiction in the Etiology and Treatment of Autism: A Scientific Review of the Evidence first published in the Spring-Summer edition of *The Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice*, vol. 1, no. 1 Found at

<http://www.srmhp.org/0101/autism.html>

### Articles:

American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Children with Disabilities (2001). Technical report: The pediatrician's role in the diagnosis and management of autism spectrum disorder in children. *Pediatrics*, 107 (5), 1221-1226.

American Academy of Pediatrics (2001). Committee on Children with Disabilities: Counseling Families Who Choose Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Their Child with Chronic Illness or Disability. *Pediatrics*, 107, (3), 598-601.

Filipek, P.A., Accardo, P. J., Ashwal, S., et al. (2000). Practice parameter: Screening and diagnosis of autism: Report of the Quality Standards Committee of the American Academy of Neurology and the Child Neurology Society. *Neurology*, 55, 468-479.

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