



Basic Supplements For ASD

Recommending supplements to help Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) children is not as straight forward as some websites would like you to believe. Just as autism is a spectrum, the individual needs of an ASD child differ from child to child.

Parents often seek advice on a product that has been marketed as a cure for autism. I have been treating my son and other ASD children long enough now that any website or product that claims to be a cure for autism, generally rings warning bells. **There is NO product that helps EVERY ASD child.**

Which supplements would best suit your child depends on your child's individual clinical picture, their diet, biochemical abnormalities and genetic weaknesses. Obviously the best way to determine which supplements would best suit your child would be by testing blood, hair, urine or stool. I acknowledge that not all parents are able to do this due to financial constraints. With this in mind there are some supplements that consistently come up low on pathology testing and often form a basic supplement regime to begin with.

Advice from those that have already been through this before.

Please refer to [Guidelines For Implementing Supplements in ASD Children](#) before introducing any supplement. How we introduce supplements into children is important as some children can be very sensitive. Introducing supplements to your child can be easy or a real battle. If the battle lines have been drawn, you are not alone, many parents have already experienced this problem. If this is the case, please contact me for advice as there are many ways of getting around this problem.

Quality of supplements - please consider

This not an issue that is on top of the list of concerns for parents beginning this journey. If like me, you start with supermarket brands assuming that quality is guaranteed. It was only after I studied naturopathy, that I appreciated the degree of testing that reputable companies put their raw material and final product through to ensure quality of the final product and stability over the recommended shelf-life.

Does it surprise me to see studies on supplements that has found:

- Vitamin and mineral supplements with ingredients that are missing and the levels as stated on the product label as being wrong. Of concern were a considerable number of supplements that contained lead!
- Herbal supplements that do not contain the correct species of the plant, or the incorrect part of the plant was used that contained low or none of the active ingredient.
- Supplements can contain fillers that your child may react to. Tablets can also be coated with chemicals to facilitate them being swallowed as well as colourings and artificial flavours. Children can react to "natural colours and flavours" in supplements.


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Changing the
way we think
about treating
autism.



AUTISM-SUPPLEMENTS

Herbal Supplements & Vitamins
for Kids on the Spectrum

The most common supplements often used in supplementing ASD children

As mentioned previously, you may not be starting with all of the supplements below. It depends on the individual needs of your child, which is best assessed by a well experienced practitioner familiar with treating ASD children.

- **Vitamin B6** - may be best supplemented as pyridoxal-5-phosphate (p-5-p), which is the active form of B6. Some children may need both pyridoxal phosphate and p-5-p.
- **Magnesium** - in a chelate or a glycinate form. If constipation is an issue then magnesium oxide may be required.
- **Calcium** - if children are on a casein free diet then additional calcium may be required.
- **Zinc** - zinc is so important as children are growing and developing. Low zinc can cause low appetite or pica (eating of non-food items). If zinc levels do not increase with supplementation, then zinc in the citrate or picolinate form may be required.
- **Vitamin A** - preferably supplemented as cod liver oil as the beta-carotene in food is not converted to vitamin A very well in many children.
- **Vitamin C** - this is a vitamin that I see consistently coming up low in Organic Acid Test results in ASD children so is a core supplement in my practice.
- **Vitamin E** - as a supplement with a mix of all the different forms of vitamin E.
- **Essential Fatty Acids** - (DHA, EPA) - These essential fatty acids are so important for the developing brain and nervous system. Using a good quality cod liver oil provides the essential fatty acids as well as vitamin A and vitamin D.
- **Probiotics** - especially if there are gastrointestinal issues or allergy, like eczema. If there is a specific issue like constipation, loose stools, parasites, gut inflammation or eczema, specific probiotic strains need to be matched to the underlying condition.
- **Multivitamin** - often individual vitamin and minerals are trialled first to ensure tolerance. A multivitamin may be used, however copper levels need to be checked. If copper levels are high, as they are in many children, then a multivitamin (no matter how good) will not be suitable for them, unless it does not contain copper.

Specifically in Australia

- **Selenium** - selenium is low in Australian soils therefore selenium deficiency is quite common.
- **Iodine** - not a supplement that is commonly considered, however studies have shown that iodine deficiency is quite common in the eastern Australian states. Parents are often using salt that is not iodised, together with a child's picky eating habits, ASD children may be quite low in iodine. Iodine is required for proper cognitive function.
- **Vitamin D** - although we live in a country with so much opportunity to receive adequate daily sunshine, many children test low for vitamin D.