

# A Good Diet for Children with Autism

If you're looking for the best diet for autism, one thing to consider is that every child is different so there isn't just one autism diet that works. However, some studies have shown that children with autism tend to be deficient in certain nutrients, so focusing on foods that provide the most nutrition is key.

Some autistic children have a restricted diet, other may over eat and sensory needs often cause issues.

Ways to encourage a healthier diet:

- Social stories about importance of different types of food
- Use weekly/daily menus
- Use visual tools to help your child to express their needs, feelings, stress, hunger and fullness scales
- Use a food group chart and encourage picking from each section within a day
- Use reward systems
- Model healthy eating
- Change food according to sensory needs e.g. blending
- Introduce new foods little and often
- Think about portion size and position of the food on the plate



## Foods to avoid

- Sugar- sweets, fizzy drinks and cakes
- Artificial ingredients – dyes, additives, preservatives, Monosodium Glutamate and processed foods
- Dairy products- cheese, yogurt and animal milk
- Gluten- rye, barley, wheat, pasta and bread
- Corn
- Fried food
- Soya based foods
- Refined carbohydrates-crisps
- Potatoes
- Processed meats

## Foods to eat

- Probiotics and Fermented foods e.g. sauerkraut (pickled cabbage) and kimchi (mixed vegetables)
- Whole foods (natural)
- Vegetables- peppers, spinach, kale, broccoli, peas, asparagus, onions, garlic, tomatoes, carrots, mushrooms, sweet pepper, avocado, squash
- Fruits- melons, citrus fruits, mango, apricots
- Wholegrains
- Oily Fish (Omega 3) - salmon, mackerel and sardines
- Lean meats
- Nuts and seeds- walnuts, chia and flax
- Pulses and beans- chick peas and lentils
- Vitamin- B6, C and magnesium
- Almond, oat, rice, coconut and cashew milk
- Gluten free bread
- Alternative cheese and dairy free products
- Eggs
- Oatmeal
- Rice

