

IDEA Collective: April 2025

Autism Awareness Month

Celebrating Autism Awareness Month in Dietetics and Nutrition

What is autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

Autism is a lifelong neurodivergence and disability that affects how individuals experience and interact with the world. People with autism may have differences in thinking, feeling, and communicating, including challenges with socializing, sensory sensitivity, intense interests, and repetitive behaviors. Autism is a spectrum, meaning each individual has a unique set of characteristics, and these may vary in different situations or contexts. While more than 1 in 100 people have autism, many face barriers to diagnosis, especially within marginalized communities. Autism is not a learning disability or mental health condition ([Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#), [CDC](#), & [National Autistic Society](#)).

The [National Autistic Society \(UK\)](#) advises professionals who may provide interventions for people with autism to:

- Ensure they have a good understanding of autism
- Be person-centered and make the patient central to all decisions while maintaining their dignity
- Enable people with autism to do the things they love
- Never try to make someone “less autistic”
- Treatment should be based on the best available evidence

For additional information on autism and nutrition, check out these resources and organizations:

- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:**
 - [Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Nutrition Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs](#)
 - [Nutrition for your child with ASD](#)
- **Autism Research Institute:**
 - For Autism Science Month (April), [subscribe](#) for free resources & information every week of the month.
 - [Nutrition resources](#)
- **National Institute of Health:**
 - [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

- [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#)
- **Autistic Self Advocacy Network:**
 - [Resources](#) for creating accessible training, events, and handouts
- **Section 508 (federal law requiring accessibility):**
 - [Training and tools](#) for creating accessible electronic information and digital services

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