



COMMUNITY
SERVICES #1
enable • enhance • enrich

AUTISM

• CS#1 NUTRITION •

Autism is a complex developmental condition. Children with autism can display types of behaviour that affect eating habits and food choices.

For many children, the texture, taste, colour, or temperature of some foods can be too overwhelming. They may refuse to eat certain foods, because the experience is unpleasant.

They may prefer processed foods which are high in sugar, fat, and sodium. This can lead to nutrient deficiencies, being under or overweight, and poor health.

Did you know?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Dietitians experienced at working with people with autism can help find an effective approach.

HEALTHY EATING AUTISM • CS#1 NUTRITION •

Do:

- Provide a variety of food from the five food groups: fruit, vegetables, grain, dairy and protein.
- Provide meals and snacks around the same time each day.
- Eat with your child and be a healthy-eating role model.
- Choose new foods that are similar to foods your child already eats. For example, a child who already eats cucumber may accept celery, because it is also green and crunchy.
- Offer a new food along with one of your child's favourite foods.
- Take small steps and offer lots of rewards along the way.

Don't:

- Be impatient; seek help if you need it.
- Put your child on a restrictive diet (such as gluten-free or casein-free); they are not beneficial and can make it harder for a child to meet their nutritional needs.
- Try to change too much all at once. Your child may need to get used to touching and smelling the food before trying it.

Supported by



ACT
Government

www.communityservices1.org/nutrition