

ADHD AND AUTISM WELLBEING & NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT GUIDE



A practical, evidence-informed guide
for people exploring non-medication support
or wanting to optimise their wellbeing



Food-First Priorities

for ADHD and Autism

About this support booklet

We know that trying to work out what is best to help with your ADHD and/or Autism can be difficult. It's why we have created two support documents for you.

One with options of clinicians who can help you post diagnosis and with signposting to NHS, charities and other resources which you can see on our [ADHD & Autism Resource Hub web page here](#).

And this one which focuses more on nutrition and lifestyle changes you could consider.

Nutrition and lifestyle support can help general wellbeing, energy, sleep, appetite and physical health. We know that some people can find this form of advice very helpful and others do not. And it is not a cure for ADHD or autism and should not replace evidence-based assessment, medication, psychological support, environmental adjustments or medical care.

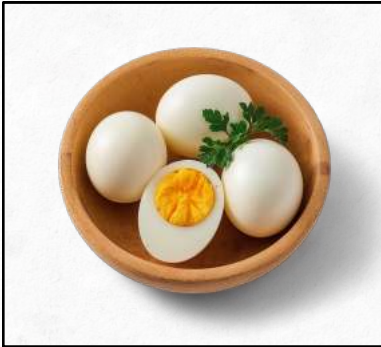
But have a look through this support document and see if you feel any of the suggestions mentioned here could help you.

Best wishes

The Total Health West Berkshire Assessment Team.

Food-First Priorities

for ADHD and Autism



Stable blood sugar & steady energy

Power up your day with a protein-packed bowl! Pair protein with carbs and high fibre meals.

It's perfect for refueling and maintaining energy



Regular meals + planned snacks

Regular meals and planned snacks may help reduce energy dips and support more consistent eating patterns.



Hydration + caffeine awareness

Dehydration worsens fatigue and focus.
Staying well-hydrated supports attention and energy levels.

Managing caffeine helps prevent sleep disruption, anxiety and energy crashes



Sleep + Relaxation

Good sleep is associated with better focus, emotional regulation and day-to-day functioning.

Good sleep helps the brain reset, while relaxation reduces stress and supports calmer, clearer thinking.



ADHD and Supplements

OMEGA-3 (EPA/DHA)

Omega-3 supplements have been studied in ADHD. Reviews suggest any benefits are small and inconsistent, and they should not be presented as a standalone ADHD treatment.

NICE advises healthcare professionals not to advise or offer fatty acid supplementation for treating ADHD in children and young people.

Families who choose to try omega-3 should treat it as optional wellbeing support, not treatment, and review after 8–12 weeks.

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is important for bone, muscle and immune health. Low vitamin D is common in the UK, and NHS guidance advises most adults and children over 4 to consider 10 micrograms daily in autumn and winter. There is research exploring links between vitamin D and ADHD symptoms, but this is not strong enough to recommend vitamin D as an ADHD treatment. Supplementation is appropriate where intake or blood levels are low, or in line with UK public health advice.

TARGETED MINERALS

Iron, zinc and magnesium are important nutrients for health and brain function. Deficiency can affect wellbeing, energy, sleep and development. Some studies have explored links between ADHD symptoms and nutrient status, but evidence is not strong enough to recommend routine mineral supplementation for ADHD. Testing and clinical advice are recommended before supplementing, especially for iron, because excess intake can be harmful.

These are not a replacement for ADHD medication, but can be a helpful addition to a wider treatment plan.



Nutrition Support For Autistic People

Many autistic people have a complicated relationship with food, not because they are being difficult or fussy, but because eating can be affected by sensory differences, routines, anxiety, interoception and previous experiences. The aim is not to force change, but to support adequate nutrition while reducing stress around food.

Helpful approaches may include:

- Keep mealtimes predictable where possible.
- Offer familiar foods alongside small, low-pressure exposure to new foods.
- Respect sensory preferences around texture, smell, temperature, colour and food separation.
- Avoid force, pressure, bribery or sudden removal of safe foods.
- Consider visual menus, meal routines, preferred plates/cutlery and quieter eating environments.

Monitor whether the person is getting enough energy, protein, fibre, fluids and key micronutrients.

Seek dietetic advice if the diet is very restricted.

This is particularly important if only a small number of foods are eaten, entire food groups are avoided, weight is changing unexpectedly, or there are concerns about nutritional adequacy.

Important caution

Exclusion diets, such as gluten-free or casein-free diets, should not be used to manage the core features of autism unless there is a separate medical reason, such as coeliac disease, allergy or intolerance, and appropriate professional advice is in place.

Meet our Health and Nutrition Coach

Sarah Culpepper is a qualified Health Scientist, a Registered Nutrition and Health Coach with the UK International Health Coaching Association (UKIHCA) and an Accredited Practitioner with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) she has worked as a health and safety trainer and private chef and has spent many years mentoring and assessing within a range of industries.

She coaches individuals, facilitates group coaching and works privately with NHS surgeries to coach patient cohorts, specialising in metabolic disease and healthy ageing. She uses recognised coaching techniques and science led data, to work with clients to prioritise goals, work through existing belief patterns and create individual action plans designed to help you implement the steps that you need to reach your goals and achieve long term results at your pace. Her passion is to help people implement preventative dietary and lifestyle interventions, to reduce the risk of disease and live the life they wish, not only now but into their future.

Sarah Culpepper (She/Hers)
Glass Sponge Coaching
Health and Nutrition Coach



[Book a consultation here](#)

assessment@totalhealthwestberks.co.uk | 01635791301

References

- NICE. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management. NG87
- NICE. Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: support and management. CG170
- NICE. Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management. CG142
- NHS. Vitamin D
- British Dietetic Association. Autism and diet
- Cochrane. Gillies D, Leach MJ, Perez Algorta G. Polyunsaturated fatty acids for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2023
- National Autistic Society. Eating – a guide for all audiences.