Nutritional Assessment for Children and Adults with ASD

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Introduction

This assessment is intended to help families, nutritionists and researchers make a <u>rough</u> estimate of the quality of diet and nutritional supplementation of a person with autism.

To complete the assessment, estimate the average number of servings of each of the following foods and give them point values. (Alternatively you can take a 3-day diet history of all the foods you eat, and use that for scoring). Calculate the total score, and then you'll find a scale at the bottom of the assessment to help you rate the approximate dietary quality.

Assess Quality of your Diet

<u>VEGETABLES:</u> Number of servings/day of vegetables (1 serving is half cup for teens/adults, ¼ cup for children ages 4-8; for leafy greens, the serving size is 1 cup for adults, ½ cup for children)

Most Vegetables. (except potatoes, corn – see below)	Servings/Points 2 points for each serving (only 1 point if deep-fried)	<u>Points</u>
Potatoes (including sweet potatoes but not yams)	1 point for each serving (zero if French fried)	
Corn (actually a grain, not a vegetable, but listed here since many people think of it as a vegetable; most corn in the US is Genetically Modified to have a high sugar/starch content, except for Organic which is not genetically modified and is healthier)	1 if organic and fresh/frozen; 0 if conventional (GMO)	
Bonus Points for Leafy Greens: Common leafy greens include: arugula, beet greens, cabbage, collard greens, kale, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, swiss chard, turnip greens Note: iceberg lettuce does not count for bonus points, as it has little nutritional value compared to other lettuces	1 point for each serving, maximum 2 points	
Bonus Points for Fresh or Frozen (not canned)	Mostly fresh or frozen = 2 Almost half fresh or frozen =1 Little fresh/frozen = 0 points	
	Subtotal of all points for vegetables (maximum of 16 points)	

fruit is dried use half that amount Whole Fruit: fresh or frozen	2 points per serving, maximum 6	
Common fruits include: apples, avocado ,banana ,	points	
plackberries, blueberries, cherries, cantaloupes,	politis	
cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, mango,		
nectarine, orange, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple,		
raspberries, strawberries, watermelon	2 mainta managamina ingludad in	
Oried Fruit: without added sugar Common dried fruits include: Apricots, blueberries,	2 points per serving, included in	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	total fruit points	
cherries, cranberries, raisins	Max 2 points	
Oried fruit		
Fruit Juice	1 point per 4 oz serving,	
L00% juice only	maximum 2 points	
Bonus points:	1 point for each serving, maximum	
Avocado	2 points	
Berries: Fresh or frozen blackberries, blueberries,		
poysenberries, cranberries, raspberries, strawberries		
PROTEIN:		
Common protein foods: include: legumes, beef, chicken,	4 points each serving	
eggs, fish, lamb, nuts , pork, tofu	Max 12 points	
1 serving is 4 ounces animal protein, 1 cup legumes		
ncluding tofu, or 2 ounces nuts for teens/adults, half that		
for children ages 4-8 years).		
Dairy Products Serving = 8 oz milk, 2 oz cheese, 6 oz kefir		
or yogurt for adults, and half that for children ages 4-8		
Note: many children with ASD do not tolerate dairy		
products and should consider a trial of a dairy-free diet		
after consulting with their physician/nutritionist		
Lunch Meats/Deli Meats		
Common ones include: bologna, deli turkey, ham, hot dogs	-1 point per serving	
GRAINS Number of servings of grains (1 serving = ½ cup for	teens/adults, 1/3 cup for children ages 4	-8, or .
slice of bread or equivalent # of crackers or pretzels, 2 mediu	m sized cookies)	
Whole Grains:	1 point per serving	
Common whole grains include: amaranth, buckwheat,	Maximum 4 points	
brown rice, bulgur, millet, oats, quinoa, teff, wild rice		
Refined Grains:		
Common refined grains include: bread, cakes, cereal,	-1 point per serving	
cookies, crackers, noodles/pasta, pastries, pizza, pretzels,		
snack foods,		
FATS AND OILS		
Dils: 1 serving = 1 tsp		
Nuts and seeds: 1 serving = 2 Tbsp		
Nuts and Seeds:	1 point per serving	
Common nuts and seeds include: almonds, cashews,	Maximum 4 points	
coconut, hazelnuts, hemp seeds, nut butter, peanuts,	(can be counted both here and in	
boconut, nazemuts, nemp seeds, nut butter, peanuts,	protein section)	

peanut butter, pecans, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds,	
tahini, walnuts	
Oils and Fats: Cold Pressed , Non-Refined or Extra Virgin (They say this on the label)	1 point per serving Maximum points 3
Common oils include: coconut oil, olive oil, peanut oil,	
sunflower oil, walnut oil (olive oil and coconut oil are our	
favorites)	
Other Fats and Oils:	-1 point per serving
Margarine, regular grocery store oils, shortening	
<u>SOFT DRINKS</u> Serving = 8 oz	-1 point per serving
CHIPS, COOKIES, SNACK FOODS	-1 point per serving
ADDITIONAL DIET QUESTIONS	
Do you consume an appropriate number of calories to	Yes = 2 points
maintain your weight (not overweight or underweight)	Somewhat = 1 point
	No = 0 points
Do you avoid artificial colors/flavors/preservatives	Yes = 2 points
	Somewhat = 1 point
	No = 0 points
How much of your diet is organic	Most = 2 points
	Some = 1 point
	None = 0 points
How many servings of fish do you eat each month (4 oz)	1 point per serving (0 if shark or
	swordfish due to high mercury)
	If you take fish oil = 4 points
	Max 4 points
Total Score for Diet Assessment	

Approximate Diet Assessment, based on total score

Above 44 - excellent 35-44 - very good 25-34 — average 15-24 — below average, could be improved

Below 15 – poor, great need for improvement

Although this assessment is approximate, we recommend that people with lower scores try to improve their diet and consider consulting a nutritionist and/or feeding therapist for help.

Nutritional Supplement/Special Diet Questions for ASD	
Do you take a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement daily?	Yes = 2
	No = 0
Do you take one especially designed for children/adults	Yes = 2
with autism?	No = 0
Did you do a trial of a gluten-free, casein-free (GFCF) diet	Yes = 2
or similar diet, and did you continue it if it was beneficial?	No = 0
Have you checked your iron level and treated if low?	Yes = 1
(especially important if sleep problems, for very young	No = 0
children, and for females who are menstruating).	

Caution – only take if needed, as too much can be a problem.	
Have you checked your vitamin D level, and treated if low?	Yes=1
Did you do a trial of digestive enzymes?	No=0 Yes = 1
bid you do a trial of digestive enzymes:	No = 0
Did you do a trial of high dose vitamin B6 with	Yes = 1
magnesium? (roughly 8 mg B6/pound bodyweight, with	No = 0
half as much Magnesium)?	
Do you eat 2 or more servings/week of live	Yes = 1
cultured/fermented foods, such as yogurt, sauerkraut,	No = 0
kefir, fermented vegetables, etc., or take a probiotic?	
Have you checked your carnitine level and treated if low?	Yes=1
(especially important if you do not eat beef or pork 2-	No=0
3x/week)?	
Total score for Nutritional Supplement/Special Diet	

Approximate Nutritional Supplement/Special Diet Assessment, based on total score

10 or higher expert 7-9 - very good 4-6 good

1-3 just beginning

0 should consider trial of supplements/special diets

For more info on nutritional interventions for autism, see:

"Summary of Dietary, Nutritional, and Medical Treatments for Autism" available for free at http://autism.asu.edu

Autism Nutrition Research Center, www.autismnrc.org

Autism Research Institute, www.autism.com