

Nutritional Concerns in Children with ASD

Sydney Abbott, MS, RD

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Outline

- Weight Management
- Nutrients of Concern
- Selective Food Intake
- Edible Reinforcements

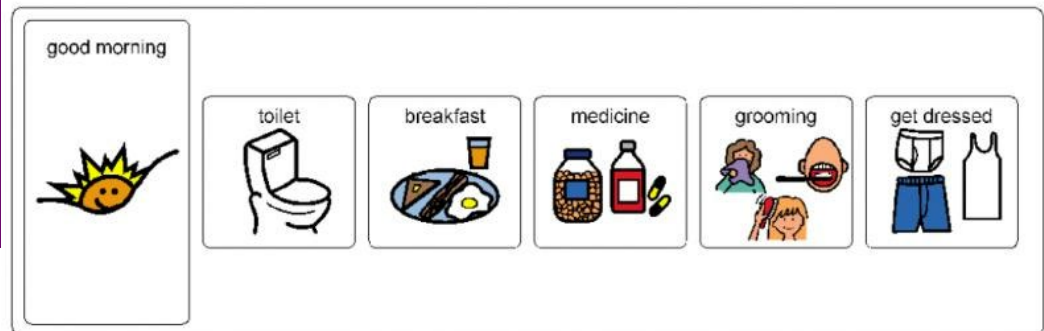


Obesity

- Adolescents with autism are 1.5-2 times as likely to be obese compared with typically developing peers ^{1,2}
- Considerations:
 - Atypical physical activity patterns
 - Screen time
 - Food based reinforcers
 - Restrictive food preferences³
 - Psychotropic Medications

Tips & Tricks

- **5** or more servings of fruit and vegetables
- **2** hours or less screen time
- **1** hour or more moderate intensity physical activity
- **0** sugar sweetened beverages



Underweight

4.5% of children with autism are underweight ^{1,2}

- Considerations:
 - Selective diets
 - Increased activity level
 - Stimulant medications
 - Constipation

Nutrition Supplements



Nutrients of Concern⁴

- Vitamins A, D, K
- Calcium, Potassium
- Fiber
- Protein
- Sodium



Selective Food Intake

- Food Selectivity: Sensory aversions, brand rigidity, environmental impacts, frequent single food intake⁵
- Children with selective food intake are less likely to consume a nutritionally appropriate diet⁶
- Intervention: Behavioral approach in a team based setting⁷

Food Reinforcers

- Using food as a reward:^{9,10}
 - Disrupts natural hunger and satiety cues
 - Increases the appeal of the food used as a reward
 - Associates food with feelings of success

Sensory reinforcers can be as or more effective than food reinforcers¹¹

References

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Questions