

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Gut health in children with autism

Understanding symptoms, the gut-brain connection and targeted digestive support.

Comfort begins with understanding.

Food breakdown • Microbiome support • Intestinal lining



**Gut Flora Immune Balance
Probiotic**



PreBIO Formula XOS



Spectrum Enzymes

01

Recognize the signs

02

Understand the pattern

03

Build a focused plan

04

Six product profiles

05

The Gut Reset sequence

Six product profiles with ordering links, and the Gut Reset sequence from asdhelp.com. Options to discuss with your child's clinician, not a six-product regimen.

What might your child be trying to tell you?

Digestive discomfort is not always easy to put into words.

A child who cannot explain that their stomach hurts may communicate discomfort through crying, restlessness, withdrawal, food refusal or a change in behaviour. The consensus report on gastrointestinal disorders in autism recognises that a behavioural change can sometimes be the main visible sign of an underlying gastrointestinal condition

(Buie 2010, PMID 20048083).



Bowel patterns

Constipation, hard or painful stools, withholding, diarrhea or soiling.

After meals

Bloating, excessive gas, abdominal pain or reflux.

Daily changes

Less interest in food, disturbed sleep, or distress around bowel movements.

These symptoms are commonly reported in children with autism. Some children have one ongoing problem; others have several that come and go (Bjorklund 2020, PMID 32621940). Constipation is more than the number of bowel movements: pain, stool consistency, withholding and difficulty emptying the bowel also matter, and loose stool or soiling can occur alongside retained stool

(Madra 2020, PMID 32471598).

Look for a pattern

Does distress happen after meals, before a bowel movement, at night, or after several days of difficult stools? Write it down with the date. A pattern is what a clinician can work with.

Food, sleep and behaviour

Why digestive health belongs in the bigger picture.

Food selectivity and discomfort affect each other

Many autistic children accept a narrow range of foods. Texture, taste, smell and familiarity influence what they eat, and a restricted diet makes enough fibre and varied nutrients harder to reach. Discomfort can also make eating less appealing and reinforce refusal, so feeding and digestive symptoms are considered together

([Madra 2020, PMID 32471598](#)).

Why can gut problems show up as behaviour?

Children with autism who have gastrointestinal symptoms may also show more pronounced behavioural and communication difficulties, and sleep problems have been associated with poorer daily functioning and social communication ([Yang 2018, PMID 29091821](#)).

These findings describe associations. They do not mean that every behavioural difficulty has a digestive cause. A change in behaviour alongside painful stools, bloating, reflux or disrupted sleep is a reason to consider physical discomfort.

Useful observations

Keep track of meals, appetite, bowel movements, pain and sleep for two weeks. These details help a clinician understand what is happening and choose support that fits. The same log tells you, later, whether a product changed anything.

The gut-brain connection

Different symptoms call for different kinds of support.

The gut and brain communicate through nerves, immune signals, hormones and substances produced by intestinal bacteria, a network called the gut-brain axis. Research in autism has explored how differences in these systems may contribute to digestive symptoms in some children ([Björklund 2020, PMID 32621940](#)). The intestinal lining absorbs nutrients while keeping a protective barrier. Supporting digestion can mean helping food break down, keeping bowel movements regular, supporting the microbial environment and supplying nutrients the lining uses.

- 1 **Food breakdown.** Digestive enzymes act on the components of a meal.
- 2 **The microbial environment.** Prebiotics feed beneficial bacteria; probiotics supply microorganisms. One probiotic at a time.
- 3 **The intestinal lining.** Butyrate and selected nutrients can have a place in a focused plan; the lining formula in our range is for adults.

What does the enzyme research show?

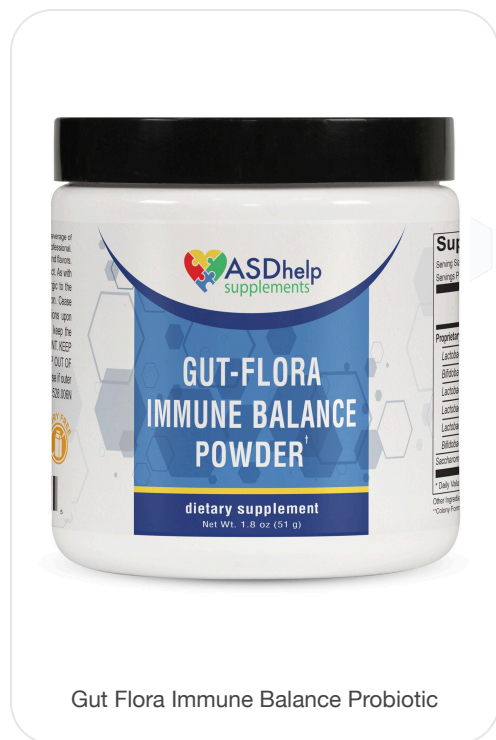
A randomized placebo-controlled trial in 101 autistic children reported improvements in gastrointestinal symptoms and some behavioural measures after three months of a digestive-enzyme supplement ([Saad 2015, PMID 26243847](#)). A smaller double-blind crossover trial did not find broad benefits ([Munasinghe 2010, PMID 20204691](#)). Results depend on the formula and the children studied, and probiotic trials in autistic children have been safe but modest and mixed.

Start with the cause

Persistent symptoms need evaluation. Choose child-appropriate support for a clear purpose and introduce one product at a time, so that changes in tolerance, appetite, stool comfort and bloating are easy to read. The profiles that follow are options to discuss, in the order the Gut Reset protocol on asdhelp.com uses them.

Gut Flora Immune Balance Probiotic

The single probiotic: six strains with *Saccharomyces boulardii* in a dairy-free powder.



What is inside

One scoop supplies a proprietary blend of six *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains (20 billion CFU) and *Saccharomyces boulardii* (3 billion CFU). Powder, dairy-free, mixed into a cool drink.

Where it fits

The protocol's one probiotic, started in week one on its own so its effect can be seen. Capsule alternative: Phage Defense, on the next page. Never two probiotics at once.

For children

Practitioner-dosed; the scoop is the label amount, not a children's dose. Probiotics are not for severely immunocompromised children, children with a central line, or preterm and newborn infants.

Observe stool comfort and regularity at 4 to 6 weeks. Stop for a rash or worsening symptoms.

[Shop this product →](#)

FORMAT

Powder

PACK SIZE

51 g (1.8 oz)

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Core, week 1. One probiotic at a time.

Phage Defense

A probiotic and bacteriophage combination for a child who swallows capsules.



Phage Defense

What is inside

Seven probiotic strains (5 billion CFU) with a 15 mg PrePhage bacteriophage blend in a delayed-release capsule. Probiotics supply microorganisms; bacteriophages target particular bacteria. These are label amounts that describe the product, not a universal pediatric recommendation.

Where it fits

Instead of Gut Flora, not with it: one probiotic at a time. A practitioner-guided choice according to digestive symptoms, health history and tolerance.

For children

Practitioner-dosed. Same probiotic cautions as Gut Flora: not for severely immunocompromised children, a central line, or preterm and newborn infants. Product-specific benefits in autistic children have not been established.

[Shop this product →](#)

FORMAT

Capsules

PACK SIZE

60 capsules

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Alternative to Gut Flora, never with it.

PreBIO Formula XOS

Nourishment for beneficial intestinal bacteria, in a sour-apple chewable.



PreBIO Formula XOS

What is inside

Xylooligosaccharides (XOS) as PreticX, 1.4 g per chewable tablet. Prebiotics are substances that beneficial gut microorganisms use as food; unlike probiotics they supply no live bacteria.

Where it fits

Week two of the protocol, as the probiotic's partner. Adults start at one chewable and build to two (2.8 g XOS) over a week; some gas in the first week is expected. A convenient format when a child will not take powders or capsules.

For children

Practitioner-dosed; start low and build up over a week, watching tolerance, especially if gas or bloating is already present. The label gives no separate children's dose.

The goal is a more supportive intestinal environment. A prebiotic is selected for the child's needs rather than added automatically.

[Shop this product →](#)

FORMAT

Chewables

PACK SIZE

60 chewable tablets

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Core, week 2, built up over a week.

Enzymes with meals

Spectrum Enzymes capsules, or Chewable Enzymes for a child who will not swallow capsules.



Spectrum Enzymes



Chewable Enzymes

What is inside

Spectrum Enzymes: amylase, protease, lactase, lipase and cellulase in a capsule taken at the start of each meal. No wheat. **Chewable Enzymes:** a broad-spectrum blend of amylases, proteases, lipase, lactase and other sugar-specific enzymes in a chewable. The label lists wheat.

Where it fits

From week two, at the start of meals. Enzymes work on food; their role is different from that of a prebiotic or a gut-lining nutrient. Use one enzyme product, not both.

For children

Practitioner-dosed. The chewable is the format for a child who will not swallow capsules, but it contains wheat, so it is not for a wheat allergy or a medically required gluten-free diet. Bio Defence, the between-meals enzyme in the adult protocol, contains egg.

Observe meal-related comfort, bloating and stool changes. Enzymes do not replace assessment of persistent digestive symptoms.

[Spectrum Enzymes →](#)

[Chewable Enzymes →](#)

FORMAT

Capsules / Chewables

PACK SIZE

180 capsules / 180 chewable tablets

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Core, from week 2, one enzyme product.

Butyric Prebio Fiber

Butyrate combined with a complementary fibre blend.



Butyric Prebio Fiber

What is inside

Magnesium and sodium butyrate supplying 250 mg of butyric acid per serving, with a 1,000 mg fibre blend of psyllium, inulin and apple pectin, and fennel seed. Butyrate is normally produced when intestinal bacteria ferment fibre; it is an energy source for the cells lining the colon.

Where it fits

An optional item in the protocol: a second fermentable fibre, so it comes after the prebiotic has settled, starting with one capsule. An option to discuss when a practitioner wants butyrate and fibre together.

For children

Practitioner-directed, starting below the label serving. The label amounts describe the product, not a children's dose.

Fibre tolerance varies. Build support gradually and monitor gas, bloating and bowel comfort.

[Shop this product →](#)

FORMAT

Capsules

PACK SIZE

90 capsules

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Optional, after the prebiotic settles.

Gut Restore

A multi-ingredient powder focused on the gut lining. Not for children.



Gut Restore

What is inside

L-glutamine, zinc carnosine, N-acetylglucosamine and citrus pectin, with DGL licorice, aloe vera, slippery elm and marshmallow. One scoop (8 g) in the morning between meals. The powder contains decaffeinated black tea and carries a California Proposition 65 notice.

Where it fits

The last step of the adult protocol, when nutritional support for the intestinal lining is part of the plan. A different purpose from helping a meal break down. Not with InflamaCare or Trace Minerals: one zinc source per person.

For children: not included

A full scoop contains 17 mg of zinc, which on its own exceeds the pediatric limit. Gut Restore stays out of the child version of the protocol, on the website and in this guide. The child sequence stops at the probiotic, the prebiotic and enzymes.

Supporting the lining is a nutritional goal. This formula has not been established as a treatment that heals intestinal disease.

[Shop this product \(adults\) →](#)

FORMAT

Powder

PACK SIZE

225 g (8 oz)

ROLE IN THE PROTOCOL

Adults only, last step. Not in the child version.

The Gut Reset sequence

One product at a time, in the order the protocol page uses. Children: every amount is set by the practitioner.

- 1 **Week 1: the probiotic.** Gut Flora Immune Balance Probiotic, or Phage Defense for a child who swallows capsules. Never both.
- 2 **Week 2: the prebiotic, then enzymes with meals.** PreBIO Formula XOS built up over the week; Spectrum Enzymes or the chewable at the start of meals.
- 3 **Optional: Butyric Prebio Fiber.** Only after the prebiotic settles; start below the label serving.
- 4 **Adults only, last: Gut Restore.** Its 17 mg of zinc keeps it out of the child version.
- 5 **Judge at 4 to 6 weeks** for stool comfort and regularity, at 12 weeks for enzymes and behaviour. Stop for a rash or worsening symptoms.

Write the plan your clinician sets

Probiotic + daily amount

.....

Prebiotic + daily amount

.....

Enzymes + when

.....

Review date

.....

First-line care comes first

Constipation that persists needs medical evaluation. Polyethylene glycol is the guideline first-line treatment; the magnesium forms in our catalog are not laxative forms. Blood in the stool, weight loss or pain need a clinician before any supplement. Talk to your child's healthcare provider before use.

On the site: the protocol page with every dose and caution, asdhelp.com/pages/protocols/gut-reset. The evidence, study by study: asdhelp.com/blogs/research/gut-symptoms-in-autism-what-the-microbiome-probiotic-and-enzyme-studies-show. Protocol pricing: 10% off automatically when three or more protocol items are in the cart; every item stays available on its own.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. This guide describes ingredients and label directions; it is not medical advice. A child's amounts are set by the child's healthcare professional.

Labels checked October 2026. Images: ASDhelp. © 2026 ASDHelp Supplements, 555 Anton Boulevard, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.