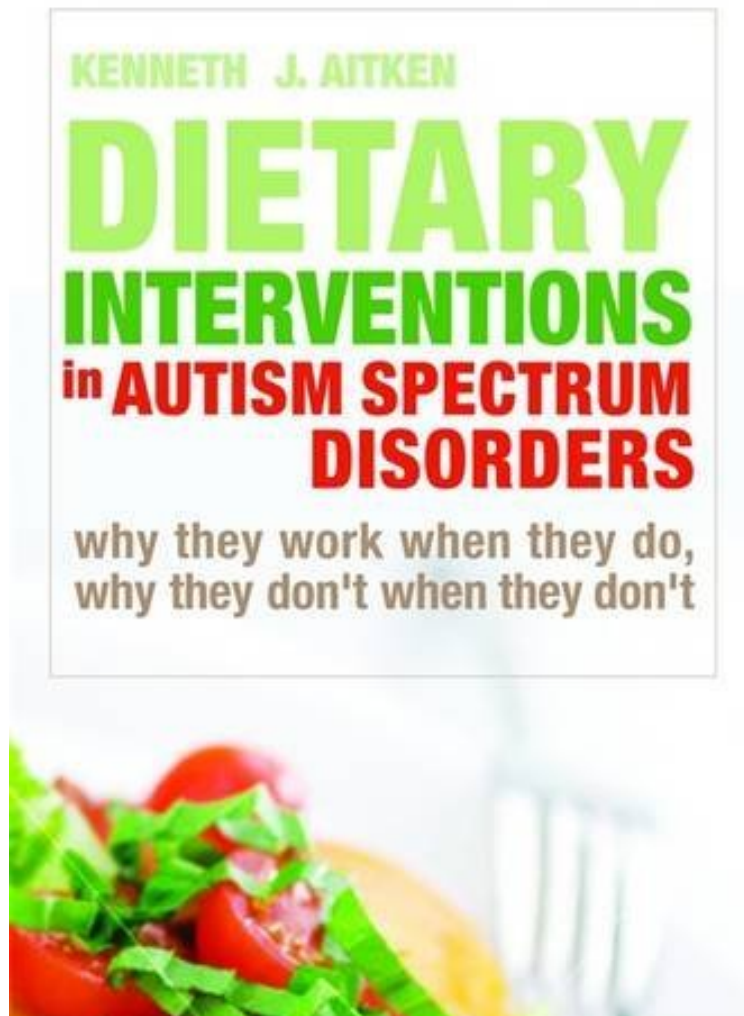


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Dietary Interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders: Why They Work When They Do, Why They Don't When They Don't

Kenneth Aitken

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Kenneth Aitken : Dietary Interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders: Why They Work When They Do, Why They Don't When They Don't before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dietary Interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders: Why They Work When They Do, Why They Don't When They Don't:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The child cannot wait, we need to act now

By Erik Gfesser

After having just recently read Susan Lord's "Getting Your Kid on a Gluten-Free Casein-Free Diet" (see my review), discovering this text by Aitken on a recent visit to the Washington University in Saint Louis School of Medicine bookstore was a welcome invitation to discover for myself the recent (as of early-2009) research in this field that I had yet to come across elsewhere. Aitken's exploration of the main dietary approaches that have been advocated for individuals exhibiting Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) is superb. The polyunsaturated fat (PUFA), oxalate, and phenol metabolism diagrams were what originally attracted me, due to my chemistry background, but the reason I decided to read this book was to gain the knowledge to understand from a research perspective many of the ASD diets in existence. After discussing diet in general and dietary interventions, the author presents the diets that are currently used with ASDs along with corresponding reasons for doing so: the Mackarness (Low Carbohydrate, High-Protein) Diet, the Feingold Diet, the Specific Carbohydrate Diet, the CF-GF Diet, the Low Oxalate Diet, the Low Glutamate Diet/GARD (Glutamate-Aspartate Restricted Diet), the Low Phenylalanine Diet, the Low Phenol Diet, the Body Ecology Diet, and the Rotation Diet. The last main section of the text discusses the Simple Restriction Diet (SRD) that the author, currently an independent consultant and previously Principal Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, proposes. For each of these approaches, Aitken explores the potential benefits, evidence for and against each and its relation to different genetic conditions, and information where available on relevant publications, web resources, and support groups. In his extensive, informative introduction, the author notes that "a number of books are available dealing with specific dietary approaches to ASD", but that "the principal flaw in the literature to date is in being overinclusive - the general books assume that everyone requires the same optimum diet and those which deal with ASD assuming that every ASD person has the same problem with casein and gluten digestion/a fatty acid deficiency/a specific vitamin deficiency/another specific dietary factor and that, therefore, everyone with ASD should be helped by adopting the same diet. Neither conclusion is justified". While Lord mentioned in passing that when considering diet, one needs to "move on past the lame excuse, 'When I checked with the doctor, he said that he'd seen more kids harmed by poor nutrition from the diet than helped by the diet'", Aitken addresses this stumbling block head-on: "Despite the popularity of dietary interventions for ASD, there is surprisingly little in the way of adequate peer-reviewed clinical research, and few randomized double-blinded controlled trials exist in this area. This is partly because such research is difficult - keeping people from knowing what they are eating and drinking, then changing their diet, without them being aware, for long enough to see whether there are any effects is hard to do and is not without significant ethical problems. It is also partly because there is far less funding available for such research compared to, say, funding made available to research a new patent medication. Unless there is a very strong incentive, food manufacturers are unlikely to rush to sponsor research on whether cutting down on or excluding their products may be beneficial. This is similar to the slow measured pace at which the tobacco industry tested the claims of effects from smoking on lung cancer, and the way that automobile manufacturers welcomed research on removing lead from petrol, thus reducing engine efficiency". In his conclusion, Aitken writes that "we should not be waiting for the research evidence on the minutiae of why [the adoption of such simple, inexpensive dietary means] works to come in first. For many families, this is happening anyway but is largely being ignored by the clinical and research community. To paraphrase the introductory quote from Gabriela Mistral: 'The child cannot wait, we need to act now'".

Very well said.

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'Given the increased interest in the relationship between diet and autism spectrum conditions, this is a timely publication which is both thorough and balanced in content. Parents and professionals alike will find this book of use by virtue of Ken's meticulous reviews of current scientific evidence for a variety of diets combined with practical advice on the application of such interventions.'- Dr. Paul Whiteley, Autism Research Unit
Dr. Aitken provides a timely synthesis of diet interventions in autistic spectrum disorders set within a framework of historical and political references. This informative work offers invaluable assistance to the wider clinical team, further enabling effective support and guidance to the ASD community in its quest for a healthy future.'- Rosemary Kessick, former CEO of AiA (Allergy Induced Autism)
Research in autism increasingly indicates the existence of different forms of the condition, and the possibility of dietary interventions having a positive effect on symptoms and behaviours associated with autism. The author explores the main dietary approaches that have been advocated in ASD. For each approach, the author explores the potential benefits; evidence for and against the diet and its relation to different genetic conditions; and information, where available, on relevant publications, web resources and support groups. The author proposes an approach, the Simple Restriction Diet (SRD), which he describes in detail, explaining how to implement this approach and how to use it to work out whether a dietary approach is of benefit. This book will be a valuable resource for families, individuals and professionals wishing to understand and explore the possibilities of dietary interventions and the benefits they can have for those on the autism spectrum.

"Often overlooked by professionals, dietary interventions in autistic spectrum disorders can be very helpful and more importantly, are something that parents and carers can actually do to help the children. However, many different diets have been suggested and parents/carers can waste time and money trying the wrong diet for their particular child. Dr Aitken's book gives much-needed practical advice on matching the diet to the child and clear explanations about the biochemical background involved. Essential reading for anyone caring for a child with ASD.'- Dr Rosemary Waring, University of Birmingham
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There is a great deal to praise about this book: the format, the style where science is both readable and comprehensible, the facts, the theories and claims, and a hefty dose of reality. (Whitterer on Autism)
About the Author
Kenneth J. Aitken is an experienced psychologist and author with a specialist interest in ASDs. He works as an Independent Consultant, based in

Edinburgh and as a Clinical Psychologist for the LD-CAMHS Service, Greater Glasgow, and was previously Principal Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh. He is co-author of *Children with Autism*, also published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.