

April is National Autism Awareness Month

Autism spectrum disorders are disorders in which young children cannot develop normal social relationships, use language normally or not at all, behave in compulsive and ritualistic ways, and may fail to develop normal intelligence.

- Affected children have difficulty communicating with and relating to others and following rigid routines.
- Diagnosis is based on observation and the reports of parents and other caregivers.
- Most children respond best to highly structured behavioral interventions.

Autism is one of several related disorders of brain development. These disorders, known as autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or pervasive developmental disorders, occur in 1 of 150 children. Classic autism is the most common of these disorders. Asperger's syndrome, Rett's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) are the other ASD. Symptoms of ASD may appear in the first 2 years of life, but in milder forms symptoms may not be detected until school age. These disorders are 2 to 4 times more common in boys than in girls

The specific causes of ASD are not fully understood, although they are clearly biologically determined. It is clear, however, that ASDs are not caused by poor parenting, adverse childhood conditions, or vaccination.

Disorder	Effects	Description
Asperger's Syndrome	Generally, language and cognitive skills are better than those in children with autism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are socially isolated and often viewed as odd or eccentric. • Children typically have repetitive patterns of behavior. • They usually have specific, narrow, and obsessive interests and activities. • Sensation may be unusual. For example, children may be very sensitive to noises, food odors or tastes, or clothing textures. • Children tend to use and understand language concretely and literally. Thus, they have difficulty recognizing irony or jokes. • Movements become clumsy.
Autism	It begins before age 3 years. Intellectual disability is impaired to some degree in many children, and severe regression of language and sociability occurs between age 18 and 24 months in about 25%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social interaction and communication are markedly impaired. • Children may not make eye contact or be able to understand tone of voice or facial expressions. • Children typically have repetitive stereotyped patterns of behavior.
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder	After 2 years of normal growth, a marked regression occurs in at least two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills • Language • Bladder and bowel control • Motor skills • Symptoms may become more severe than in autism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some characteristics may resemble those of autism (such as repetitive stereotyped behavior) or those of childhood schizophrenia (such as lack of response to emotional situations).
PDD-NOS	Symptoms are less severe than those of autism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These disorders include a wide range of intellectual, behavioral, and social problems that do not match the criteria needed to diagnose a specific disorder.
Rett Syndrome	It begins after 6 months of normal development and causes severe intellectual disability. It is caused by a gene mutation and affects girls almost exclusively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brain and head do not grow as quickly as expected. • Social interaction is impaired. • Children lose the ability to speak. • They become unable to use their hands purposefully and typically wring them compulsively. • Seizures may occur, and coordination is lost. • Some characteristics (for example, toe walking and body rocking) may resemble those of autism.

In a new partnership, MerckEngage.com gives you health tools with just a click

Free health support programs that offer a range of resources covering nutrition, physical activities, and treatment plan help are now available to Pottstown Medical Specialists Inc. (PMSI) patients, thanks to a new partnership forged between the practice and MerckEngage.com.



tools that can keep their healthy lifestyles on track. It supplies step-by-step guidance on things like meal planning (see recipe below).

MerckEngage.com is a website sponsored by Merck Pharmaceuticals, the company that makes medications you may use regularly. It provides a convenient, easy, and no-cost way for PMSI patients to keep up-to-date on health topics, receive education and tips between office visits, and take advantage of easy-to-use



***New, and created
with you in mind!***

Welcome to PMSI's patient newsletter. You can look forward to monthly editions with tips to improve your health. Visit our website, **pmsiforlife.com**, for archived issues.

It offers prescription savings cards for eligible patients taking certain Merck medications. And patients can talk one-on-one with a health coach ... all at no charge!

Here at PMSI, we do hope you're getting some form of regular exercise. Even a little is better than none! For those who are exercise beginners, as well as those who are veteran exercise buffs, MerckEngage.com lets PMSI patients access an activity planning tool that could make a difference in how you feel about, and what benefits you're getting from, an exercise routine.

If you're following a treatment plan suggested by a PMSI physician, MerckEngage.com supplies a simple tracking tool that lets you monitor your health condition on your own, as well as share progress updates with PMSI staff members at our various offices in Bally, Boyertown, Collegeville, Pottstown, Phoenixville, Royersford, and Stowe.

The next time you visit a PMSI office, ask your physician or a staff member about how you can take advantage of all MerckEngage.com has to offer.

Resources for autism

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.medicalhomeinfo.org/health/autism.html

Association for Science in Autism Treatment
www.asatonline.org

Autism Society of America
www.autism-society.org

Autism Speaks
www.autismspeaks.org

CDC's Autism Information Center
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

Ask your PMSI healthcare provider if you have concerns about your child's development.

Applesauce Spice Cake

Ingredients

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- Dash cloves
- Dash allspice
- ⅔ cup brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups unsweetened applesauce
- ¼ cup egg substitute
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar
- Nonstick cooking spray



Preheat oven to 350°F **Makes 6 servings**
Calories 171 **Calories from Fat 0**

- Spray a deep-dish pie plate or an 8 x 8 baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, and brown sugar. Mix well.
- Add applesauce and egg substitute. Stir just enough to mix ingredients together
- Pour into prepared dish and bake 30 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.
- Cool 5 minutes and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Total Fat 0g
Sodium 245mg
Total Carbohydrates 39g

Cholesterol 0mg
Protein 3g
Dietary Fiber 4g