



Why Some with Autism Are Not Recovering

By Cindy Griffin, Lindyl Lanham, & Julie Adams

Recent experience with clients who were “non-responders” to the best biomedical treatments made us think that maybe we had missed something. Could parasites be the surprising answer?

What are parasites? Any living creature that lives off of another living creature, consuming its nutrition, and ultimately harming it in the process, is called a parasite. Parasites come in many different forms. Bacterial parasites, like *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidia*, are responsible for severe diarrhea. Others are intracellular single-cell varieties, such as those that cause Lyme Disease and malaria, and larger types such as liver flukes and tapeworms.

Some parasites lay eggs (tens of thousands per day from a tapeworm or fluke) and others, microscopic single cell parasites, reproduce through cell splitting. Each type requires a slightly different approach to achieve elimination.

How do people get parasites? They are everywhere and largely unavoidable. Most come from oral or direct cross-contamination from soil, feces, urine, or saliva, including mouthing of toys in children, sandboxes, diaper changing tables, toilets, shopping carts, food preparation utensils, and countertops. We may even be born with them. Some spread through the air, through insect bites, if the insect is a carrier, and through our food.

Lean meat is the most common food source. Pork, beef, fish, chicken, all contain parasites (not found in the USDA inspections!). Pork is the most dangerous, because the tissue of pigs is so similar to that of humans that anything that thrives in them also thrives well in us. Produce may either contain parasites or carry them on the surface from the air, soil, water, insects, or animals that graze nearby. Watercress is frequently contaminated with a parasite linked to seizures.

What are the symptoms of parasites? Most people have few if any signs of parasites. Why? Because symptoms like unsociable behaviors or sleepless nights at the full moon are subtle. More obvious are immune system weaknesses. Parasites are very opportunistic and thrive when the immune system is stressed and can't fight them off. The inflamed gut, a welcome mat for parasites, and a compromised immune system, classic hallmarks of autism, drew our attention to parasites.

Parasites can produce very bizarre, unpredictable aggressive, angry behaviors in their hosts, many of which are classic autism.

SYMPTOMS OF PARASITES

- Fecal retention and/or smearing
- Rectal itching, digging
- Aggression
- Nail biting
- Mouthing of articles/fingers/hands
- Playing with saliva and/or genitals (stimming)
- Bruxism or grinding of teeth
- Pica or eating dirt and indigestible items
- Insomnia
- Hand-flapping
- Prolonged straining at stool
- Urination/defecation outside toilet, though toilet trained
- Enuresis in older children
- Chronic diarrhea
- Bizarre facial expressions, behaviors, worsening during full moon
- Seizures
- Obsessions and compulsions
- Anxiety over change
- Poor response to intensive biomedical and alternative treatments

Should I test for parasites? Probably not. Many parasite specialists agree that laboratory testing is imperfect and often misleading. Labs test for only 40 or 50 out of literally thousands of varieties of parasites; false negatives are common.

Treatment Options

- **Who** - Find a good professional who understands how complicated parasite removal is. Practitioners must recognize that a certain degree of gut health is necessary before beginning. They must then observe a specific order of elimination. The goal is not just eliminating parasites. Because parasite removal is a taxing event as the body excretes them and their by-products, simultaneous support of detoxification pathways and boosting the immune system is as important as fighting off the offenders.
- **What** - Pharmaceutical drugs alone are rarely successful, as many parasites have become resistant to these pesticides, and long-term use could kill not only the parasites, but also the host. Herbs combined with homeopathy are the healthiest means of elimination of parasites. Homeopathy can stimulate detoxification pathways and “keep things moving,” while the herbs create an unhealthy chemical environment for the parasites.
- **How** - Deal with the larger parasites like worms and flukes first before the microscopic, single-cell, and intracellular parasites, like amoebas and protozoa, so that the larger ones don't create “knots” or blockages in tissues.

Outcomes

Behaviors often worsen before they get better. Regressions are signs that parasites are actually present and in death throes. As these bugs try to replenish their numbers, parents may observe bizarre behaviors, such as eating dirt.

Do not undertake a parasite cleanse for children with autism spectrum disorders without the guidance of a knowledgeable practitioner. Many children can become volatile and aggressive. If they are dangerously immune compromised, and do not have adequate support, major problems with diarrhea could occur. **Do not undertake treatment without supervision for children with seizure disorders**, as treatment could cause seizures to worsen temporarily or launch a major seizure event.

Parasite removal can take four to nine months, sometimes longer. Be patient, and don't stop even though symptoms lessen or disappear.

To learn more about parasites, read the Executive Director's column, page 2, and *Guess What Came to Dinner?* by Ann Louise Gittleman, Ph.D., an Idaho nutritionist. (See booklist.) Ask your health care professional if parasites might be contributing to your family's health problems.

Cindy Griffin, Lindyl Lanham, and Julie Adams are professional homeopaths. Their practice, Homeopathy Center of Houston, provides a drug-free alternative for healing autism and developmental disorders. They host the Yahoo! Group “Homeopathy-ADDthruAutism.”