

<b>Autism</b>	
<b>Description</b>	A severely incapacitating developmental disability which has characteristic impairments in ability to form social relationships, use language, and interact with the environment.
<b>Etiology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual etiologic factors are unknown.</li> <li>• Proposed etiologies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Infections</li> <li>○ Minimal brain damage</li> <li>○ Hereditary factors</li> <li>○ CNS injury</li> <li>○ Response to vaccines</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Incidence</b>	14.7 per 1000 (1 in 68) children
<b>Signs/ Symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alterations in ability to form social relationships with other individuals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Altered responsiveness to people</li> <li>○ Limited interest in human contact</li> <li>○ Lack of attachment, or abnormal level of attachment, to parents or other caretakers</li> <li>○ Impaired ability to develop relationships with peers</li> <li>○ Decreased emotional and social reciprocity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delay in mental skills</li> <li>○ Impaired attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distractible</li> <li>▪ Obsessively attentive</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Limited range of interests</li> <li>○ Egocentricity</li> <li>○ Concrete in reasoning ability</li> <li>○ Perseveration</li> <li>○ Obsessive/compulsive disorder</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Verbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language delays</li> <li>▪ Delayed or absent speech development</li> <li>▪ Oral apraxia</li> <li>▪ Echolalia</li> <li>▪ Pronoun reversals</li> <li>▪ Impaired reciprocal conversation</li> <li>▪ Voice/pitch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be monotone</li> <li>• May have unusual pitch variations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Nonverbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decreased eye contact</li> <li>▪ Difficulty reading the facial expressions of others</li> <li>▪ Flat affect</li> <li>▪ Impaired use of gestures</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-injurious behavior</li> <li>○ Need for consistency in environment/becomes upset with unexpected environmental changes</li> <li>○ Low tolerance for frustration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sensory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Altered responses to sensory stimulation</li> <li>○ May have abnormal interest in, or aversion to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visual input</li> <li>▪ Vestibular</li> <li>▪ Textures</li> <li>▪ Smells</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alterations in muscle tone: decreased or rigid</li> <li>○ Autonomic nervous system abnormalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decreased effectiveness of homeostasis</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Toe-walking</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seizures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Swallowing Manifestations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperactivity during the meal</li> <li>• Impulsivity during the meal/food stuffing</li> <li>• Extreme food selectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limited range of accepted foods</li> <li>○ Oral aversion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oral hypersensitivity with oral aversion</li> <li>• Stereotypic movements or routines may interrupt with feeding process</li> <li>• Failure to thrive</li> <li>• Impaired awareness of hunger satiation cycle</li> <li>• Eating of nonedibles (PICA)</li> <li>• Rumination</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> </ul>