

Children's Health

New Research Study May Help Children With Autism

(NAPSA)—A new study may help families living with autism. It focuses on treating an aspect of autism that doctors say has been largely ignored up to this point: gastrointestinal (GI) dysfunction.

According to the Autism Society of America, autism affects as many as 1.5 million Americans and it's believed to be growing at a rate of 10 to 17 percent per year. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that autism is one of the most common developmental disorders, and experts estimate that up to 50 percent of children who have autism experience GI problems including constipation, bloating and abdominal pain.

There is increasing scientific evidence that there may be a link between GI problems and the underlying behavioral changes associated with autism. Scientific evidence also suggests GI problems in autistic children may be immune-related. As a result, health care professionals are beginning to look beyond medicines that work with the brain and explore treatments that address both the GI symptoms and the behavioral symptoms.

The study, which is sponsored by PediaMed Pharmaceuticals, is exploring the effect of an investigational drug on GI function and its impact on behavior in children with autism. Some 15 of the nation's top centers for autism care are serving as study sites.

"This clinical study is important to autistic children and their families," says Jon Bruss, M.D., MSPH, FAAP, Chief Medical Offi-



Children with autism may be able to participate in a research study evaluating an investigational treatment in gastrointestinal symptoms and behavior.

cer for PediaMed. "The results will help health professionals to better understand and treat this condition."

To be considered for participation in the study, a child with autism must be between 2 and 17 years of age and experience a number of specific GI symptoms.

These children will receive study medication and medical care at a specialist medical center at no cost to the family. Families can learn more at www.cureautismnow.org/research/participants/4624.jsp or www.pediamedtrials.com.

"We are optimistic for what this study will mean not only for the patients enrolled, but for the families and their children within the autistic community," says Raun Melmed, M.D., Principal Investigator at one of the leading trial sites.