

## Bottles of Pills: Medication Options for Autistic Patients

As with any illness, disease, or disorder, there are a number of medicine options available to help control these symptoms. It is important to remember that none of these medications will "cure" autism; they simply help control some of the effects of the disorder. There are advantages and disadvantages to each drug, as they all have side effects as well as benefits. When choosing medicines to effectively treat autism, your doctor can make recommendations, but since autism is a disorder which varies from person to person, you should use drugs very carefully, watching to see how the body reacts to the treatments.

First, consider the safety of the drug. Some cannot be used in children or in people under a certain weight. Make sure the dosage is easy to understand and before you choose one medicine or another find out how it is administered (pills, injections, liquid, etc). This is important if you are not comfortable with certain methods, such as injecting yourself or your child. Also find out how safe the drug is to individuals who do not suffer from autism. If you have small children in the house, you'll want to be sure that the drug is not lethal if it gets into the wrong hands. Find out what to do in case this happens, just to be on the safe side.

Also consider the side effects of the drugs you are considering. While they may be very good at controlling aggression, responsiveness, hyperactivity, or other autistic tendencies, they may also cause sedation or other side effects such as nausea or dizziness. Weigh your options carefully before beginning one of these treatments, or you could find yourself with ten bottles of pills, each taken to counteract the side effects of another. Also remember that medications may have long-term effects. Will you or your child become dependent on the drug? Will you be tolerant? How else will it affect the body over time? These are all important questions to ask your doctor before beginning any medication.

You can research the many studies on these drugs at your local library or on the Internet. Publications such as journals and healthcare magazines are probably most current and most reliable, whereas you may get some altered information on the World Wide Web, so be careful about following advice you find without first consulting your doctor. He or she may also be able to provide you with literature about the medication options available for autistic patients. Do your researching on the many choices before making any decisions, and you'll be able to better control your health.