

Book Review

The Natural Medicine Guide to Autism

by Stephanie Marohn

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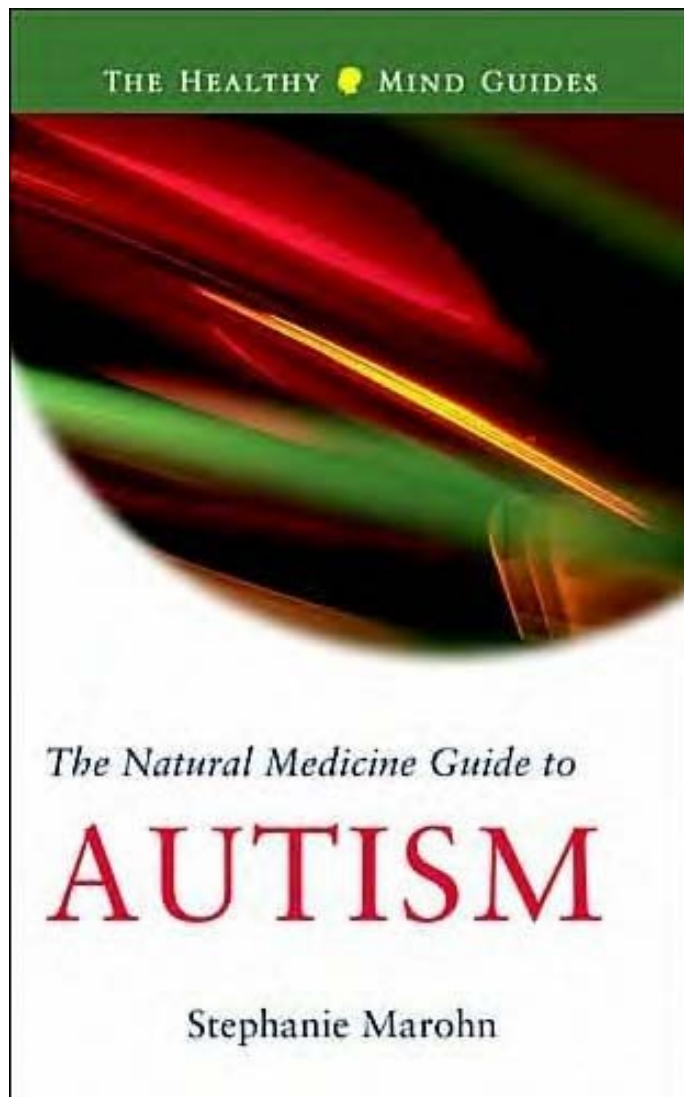
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Anyone whose loved one has been diagnosed with autism knows the feelings of hopelessness, despair, and self-blame that come with what may seem like an irreversible diagnosis for a child. Stephanie Marohn's book, *The Natural Medicine Guide to Autism*, shines as a welcome beacon of hope, and after reading *The Natural Medicine Guide*, dismissing autism as simply a genetic disorder or mental illness seems both foolish and negligent.

Part one of this book discusses the basics of autism, its possible causes, and the dual role of genetics and environment in the development of childhood autism. Of particular interest is the role of childhood vaccinations and the controversy surrounding mercury exposure (which is used as a preservative in many vaccines) as a factor. It is commonly understood that a child with a genetic predisposition for autism can be triggered by exposure to "neurotoxins," or elements toxic to a child's developing brain and nervous system, and Marohn draws upon the expertise of both natural and medical doctors to outline this phenomenon.

With its emergence in the 1940s as a disorder, autism was considered psychological in origin, its source often cited as a mother's lack of care. However, with mainstream acceptance of multiple studies by both traditional and homeopathic doctors and the publication of books written by autistics themselves, the medical establishment is now acknowledging the role of environment (vaccines, diet, nutrition, and birth trauma, to name a few) as a corollary to genes in what is considered an epidemic. The incidence of autism has increased "over 1000 percent in the past 15 to 20 years," and there are now "35 new cases of autism [diagnosed] every day in America."

The book's second section examines eight different natural medicine treatments for this disorder. Each of these approaches treats autism symptomatically and on an individual level, relying heavily on the parent as a primary source of feedback as to whether a certain treatment is effective for a specific child. Many of the practitioners examined in this section use these natural therapies in conjunction with one another, choosing, for example, to treat food allergies and also detoxify the patient's body from neurotoxins introduced environmentally.



Therapies discussed in detail are therapeutic nutrition and heavy-metal detoxification, allergy-related autism, biochemical therapy, homeopathy, cranial osteopathy, soma therapies, the Tomatis method, and neural therapy. Each assessment draws upon the work of an expert or experts in a particular field and introduces case studies whose results range from marked behavioral improvement in some children to complete recovery in others.

Anyone whose life has been touched by autism owes it to themselves and their loved one to read this book carefully and to study one or more of the therapies offered. Contact information is given for each field of study, making it an excellent starting point for anyone ready to consider natural, individual-based alternatives or corollaries to traditional medicine. Reading one inspirational case study after another of nonverbal aggressive children whose behavior changed dramatically or who were even mainstreamed into school and society make reading *The Natural Medicine Guide to Autism* a hope-filled reexamination of not only what is acceptable, but what is possible.