

# Skyrocketing Autism Spectrum Disorder Rates Challenge Country

by Brian Rossiter

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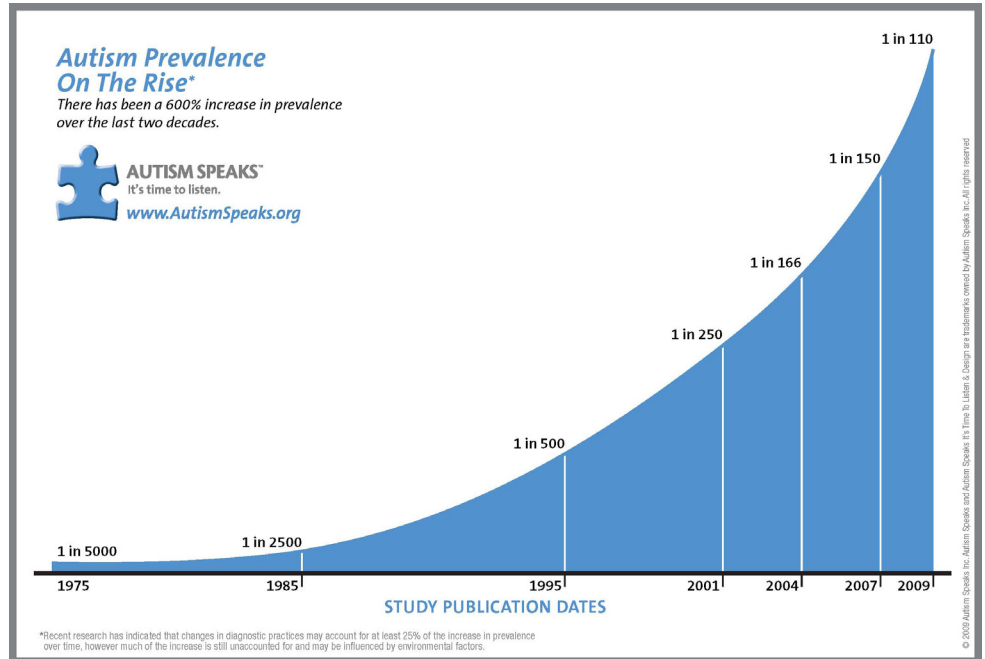
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Vaccines are considered the leading cause of these developmental disabilities, affecting at least 1 in 68 children. Some people have found a healthful raw food diet to be helpful in managing and even reversing symptoms.

Imagine wishing to be a mother for many years and then carrying a child for nine months. Imagine giving birth to a beautiful, healthy baby and feeling boundless joy. Imagine, then, one day early into parenthood, your child's health and ability to connect with you, the child's father and other loved ones vanishing almost instantly after the child suffered an extreme reaction to a vaccine.

This horror story is playing out all across America. Vaccination is tops on a list among other factors causing autism spectrum disorder, some say, and the implications of skyrocketing autism rates are colossal. Autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, is a group of developmental disabilities, including autism and Asperger Syndrome, that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. ASD has quickly and not so quietly become an epidemic in this highly developed nation, which spends the most on health care per capita in all the world yet is home to some of the planet's sickest human beings.

Autism was a rarity 50 years ago, affecting 1 in 10,000 children, according to *Vaccine Epidemic*, a comprehensive, highly researched book co-edited by Louise Kuo Habakus, M.A., and Mary Holland, J.D. This book features the voices of many, including doctors, attorneys and parents whose families have been affected. By the mid-1970s, the incidence rate had climbed to 1 in 5,000, and, by the mid-1980s, to 1 in 2,500. By 2007, autism affected 1 in 150. Today, 1 in 68 children—one boy or girl in every three kindergarten classrooms, to paint a picture—is along the autism spectrum, the CDC reports. These figures, however, are based on 2010 data for children born in 2002, Habakus said. The prevalence rate may be as high as 1 in 50 today.



Statistics released in 2012 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, show that, if growth remains steady, virtually all boys will be diagnosed with ASD by 2032, with all girls affected by 2041. Habakus underscores that this grim reality might happen even sooner, based on growth rates and the fact that the CDC bases these statistics on a birth cohort of children born about 15 years ago.

"This is perhaps the single most important issue of our time," said Habakus, also executive director of FearlessParent.org who runs the nonprofit think tank Center for Personal Rights, during a phone interview. "It's decimating our children. What does the future hold for a society filled with nonverbal adults in seizure helmets who are not toilet-trained? Who's going to pay taxes and defend our country?"

For more than 200 years in America, and especially in more recent decades, there has been a pressure to vaccinate, especially children. All 50 states have legislation requiring specified vaccines for students, although exemptions do exist. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Jacobson vs. Massachusetts* in 1905 upheld states' authority to enforce compulsory vaccination laws. A high court ruling, *Zucht vs. King*, upheld school vaccination requirements 17 years later.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the U.S. government recommended that children receive the DPT (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus), polio and smallpox vaccines, Julian Whitaker, M.D., writes in *Vaccine Epidemic*. By 1971, the measles, mumps and rubella vaccines were added to the list, Whitaker writes. In 1983, children received 10 vaccine shots from birth to the first day of kindergarten, including 22 different vaccine doses, according to the CDC. Thirty years later, the government recommended 35 to 37 shots, containing 49 to 51 different vaccine doses.

"It's no coincidence that autism spectrum disorder rates in the U.S. exploded at the same time," Whitaker writes in *Vaccine Epidemic*, adding that the majority of affected children develop normally until between their first and second birthdays. "Autism is not a disease, and it is misleading to call it a developmental disorder. Autism is diffuse, severe brain damage caused, in my opinion, almost exclusively by conglomerates of toxic substances put into vaccines and injected into pregnant women, newborns, infants and children."

The medical establishment says there's still no proof that vaccines cause ASD. Meta studies, however, now show the emerging weight of the evidence has shifted to a causal association between ingredients in vaccines and developmental delays, including autism, Habakus said.

In *Make an Informed Decision*, Mayer Eisenstein, M.D., reports that at his practice, Homefirst Health Services in Chicago: "We have about 30,000 to 35,000 children that we've taken care of over the years, and I don't think we have a single case of autism in children delivered by us who never received vaccines."

Vaccines contain a slew of mind-boggling ingredients: aluminum, antifreeze, formaldehyde, lead and monosodium glutamate (MSG). There's plenty more, including chick embryo, dog kidney, horse blood and rabbit brain. All these and more ingredients are listed on the back of a business card printed by the Vaccine Information Coalition of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. *Creating Healthy Children* author and *Vibrance* contributor Karen Ranzi, M.A., CCC-SLP, hands out these cards sometimes at speaking engagements.

Karen was out of these cards but gave an engaged crowd plenty of food for thought at a special autism symposium hosted by Arnold's Way Raw Vegetarian Café and Health Center in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, on September 16th, 2014. The symposium also included Christine O'Donnell and John Tosco as speakers.

In addition to her vital work in the raw food world as SuperHealthyChildren.com publisher and Woodstock Fruit Festival pioneer, Karen is a speech and language pathologist. She has worked with dozens of children with communication disorders for more than 34 years. Her area of specialty since 2001 is working with children on the autism spectrum. Some parents have told Karen their children suffered from ASD after being vaccinated, most often after MMR vaccinations and sometimes after DPT or Hepatitis B vaccinations.

When Karen vaccinated her daughter, Gabriela, her leg swelled to the size of a "boulder" after all three DPT vaccinations she received. Each time, pediatricians called these "normal reactions." "She screamed for two days, and her leg blew up into a rock," Karen said.

After Gabriela's third DPT shot, Karen knew for sure something was

wrong. These experiences led her to research "voraciously" about vaccinations. Karen opted not to have her son, Marco, vaccinated. Karen learned that children who have extremely negative reactions to DPT vaccinations are highly susceptible to falling along the autism spectrum disorder after being administered an MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. However, Gabriela Ranzi did not have an MMR vaccination.

Karen and her two children went raw vegan so she could heal her son's asthma. Her daughter's adverse leg reaction from the vaccine was temporary. Karen adopted a raw food lifestyle for her and her two children, then 3 and 5 years old, in 1994. Her goal was to help both of her children heal, since her son suffered from life-threatening asthma, chronic ear infections and multiple food allergies. This effort was successful for her son after 11 months of consuming green juices and a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

In Karen's home state of New Jersey, the ASD incidence rate is a staggering 1 in 49 children and 1 in 29 boys, making the Garden State home to the most cases. New Jersey in 2008 became the nation's only state to require children to receive annual flu shots.

### **Raw Food Diet Helping Children Manage and Reverse Autism**

Karen has worked with some families of children with ASD in recent years on changing their diets and reports that marked improvement has been shown among many of these children in households where diet change has been successful. "If they don't change their diets, we're just not going to see the change that we really want to see and really need to see today to turn this epidemic around," Karen said in emphasizing the importance of dietary change in healing.

In one case, a girl subsisted on mostly processed and refined chocolate pudding, Karen said. Karen used creative ways to get this child to eat fruits. Her whole-strawberry topping in the pudding was rejected, but a puréed strawberry drizzle was devoured. Next came another welcomed addition: puréed pineapple in the strawberry drizzle. "This is food chaining, and it's a way of desensitizing children to get them to eat more healthfully," Karen said.

Karen stressed that it is critical for parents to lead dietary change and be model examples of healthful eaters to their children if dietary changes to manage or reverse symptoms of autism are to be successful.

Additionally, children with ASD thrive on sensory activities such as smelling and touching. In the case of the girl whose staple was chocolate pudding, Karen ate a whole bowl of strawberries in front of her. "We rolled the strawberries across a table," she said. "We did art projects with the strawberries, making all kinds of designs. "We did a lot of smelling activities with the strawberries. ... We incorporated all aspects of sensory activities with strawberries."

Karen described another case in which two mothers who attended her "Creating Healthy Children" workshop were inspired to overhaul their families' diets to one based on fresh fruits and vegetables. "Both of their boys did not make eye contact. One spoke in one-word utterances, and the other spoke in very short phrases," Karen said, adding that half of children with ASD are nonverbal and don't speak at all.

"These parents were willing to try this," Karen continued. "They

went home and got rid of all of the packaged foods and all of the jarred foods. They started eating an abundance of fruits and vegetables in front of their kids and started being excellent role models.”

A few months later, Karen learned that these 8-year-old boys, after initially resisting raw foods, “fell in love” with them. “These two children completely reversed their autism.”

Karen said that full reversal of ASD is best achieved when children are young—as young as even 2 to 3 years old—although improvement can still be seen in older children. She added that dietary change must be entirely vegan and at least mostly raw—with wholly raw producing the best results. A diet free of gluten also produces positive results, Karen said. Found in grains such as wheat, rye, barley and oats, gluten contains opioids very similar to morphine. These affect the neurodevelopmental system, causing autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and other conditions, Karen believes, citing research by Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo.

Finally, in a case from last year, Karen said, a family she worked with adopted a wholly raw vegan diet. A boy in the family experienced almost immediate symptoms from mercury in the MMR vaccine. He flapped his hands, hit himself and spoke in short utterances, often not directed at anyone. He also encountered people nose to nose, not understanding spatial relationships. After reading *Creating Healthy Children*, the mother was convinced her child suffered from vaccine toxicity.

The first month, the family went vegetarian while the mother added increasingly more fruits and vegetables to their diets. The second month, the family went vegan. “She called me up about nine months later, and she said: ‘I cannot believe it. He is making eye contact,’” Karen said about the mother’s conversation about her son. “I haven’t done anything else. This is all I’ve done. This is the first time since he was a baby that he’s making eye contact.”

The mother wanted to keep cleaning up the family’s diet. Karen said that, with improved digestion, the boy’s neurology was changing. “There’s a very strong connection between the gut and the brain, she said. “What you eat—it goes into the gut—turns into the nourishment that nourishes the whole body. If that nourishment is not there, if there is toxicity, it can travel and affect any organ, including the nervous system and the brain.”

Each month, Karen provided recipes and meal plans to keep the family on track. After about nine months, the mother reported to Karen that teachers were contacting her with positive comments and questions about her son. They asked her “Why is he focusing better? Why is he doing his work better?” After a year, the boy began speaking in sentences.

Karen noted that this boy also received treatment in a hyperbaric chamber, a medical use of oxygen at a higher level than atmospheric pressure. He also received Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> shots to restore his critically low levels. The last time Karen spoke to the mother, the mother said she wanted to unclassify her son because she no longer believed he was on the autistic spectrum.

“People ask me, ‘Do you really have hope that such a devastating situation can turn around?’” Karen said. “I have a tremendous amount of hope for this. We see people all the time turning around from cancers and heart problems and all kinds of illnesses.”

## Vaccinations Trigger Health Conditions Beyond Autism Spectrum Disorder

Vaccinations can lead to many other health conditions in addition to autism. Raw vegan trailblazer Jesse Bogdanovich experienced an allergic reaction to a polio vaccination that transformed him from “a healthy baby into a very sick one.” He published his story on his website, *TheWholeLifestyle.com*, and shared it recently in *Vibrance* and *Fruit-Powered Digest*. “I was born perfectly healthy, but an allergic reaction to a live polio vaccine at the age of 10 months almost killed me and left me with convulsions, seizures and paralysis,” he wrote. The sickness caused him disability and ill health—including a poor immune system, juvenile diabetes and stomach issues—for many years until he discovered water fasting and a raw food diet.

Christine O’Donnell, a mother of four children and co-author of *Behind Closed Doors: Uncovering the Practices That Are Harming Our Children and What We Can Do About It*, said at the Arnold’s Way symposium that her daughter, Katie, experienced a negative reaction to a DPT vaccination. “She suddenly became lethargic,” Christine said. “I had this beautiful baby girl ... and she changed. ... She didn’t look right, and a mother knows. We know.”

Despite this reaction, Christine’s daughter had an MMR shot. This vaccination led to “full-blown asthma, full-blown food allergies, allergic to the earth, literally, to the ocean,” Christine said. “There were hives everywhere.”

Christine then had an awakening in which she realized she had done no research of her own and had trusted her doctor. One day as Katie struggled with asthma while at an appointment at the Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, her doctor wanted to give her a flu shot. Christine balked. “I decided then that she is mine now,” Christine said. “I’m going to be the expert. I’m going to research and consult only experts who, I feel, have my daughter’s best interests at heart and know the information ... and listen to me.”

Christine began exploring diet and used food as “medicine,” she said. She found another medical doctor for Katie who was also a homeopathic doctor. This professional tested Katie’s hair and discovered high levels of arsenic and aluminum in her body. “You are lucky she is not autistic,” the doctor told Christine. Katie’s defense system has been mostly restored to health, thanks to eating a diet containing plenty of plant foods over several years, Christine said.

John Tosco is the father of an 18-month-old daughter, Madeleine. He explained at the autism symposium that in order to be released from the hospital after his wife gave birth, the parents had to consent to a vitamin K shot. However, this shot is shown to contain more than just vitamin K, according to *VaccineRiskAwareness.com*. John’s wife, Katie, researched vaccinations while pregnant and told John she did not want their child to be vaccinated.

John said that he’s hopeful for more children in his family and that others in his family have children on the autism spectrum. “I’ve seen autistic kids in my family, and it’s hard and troubling to see that,” he said. “I would always inform parents, ‘Just do the research before you decide,’” John said.

## Other Causes of Autism

Exposure to heavy metals—not just in vaccines—is another



Karen Ranzi, M.A. lecturing at Arnold's Way, Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

contributor to autism spectrum disorder, according to Karen. The mercury in amalgam fillings in a pregnant mother is one way a child builds up toxic debris, which could lead to an ASD diagnosis. Just being present at a barbecue and breathing in grill vapors, which contain heavy metals, could add to a child's toxic load and become a trigger for autism. "There are so many areas where heavy metals are entering into our system," Karen said.

Couples wanting to conceive are advised to "heal themselves before they get pregnant," said Karen, whose *Creating Healthy Children* is a guidebook on the subject with its emphasis on a raw food diet. "Those who already have children are not to fret. ... We can heal our children even if our children are already showing symptoms of autism spectrum disorder."

### Opting Out of Vaccinations

Of course, refusing vaccination for their child and eating a healthy diet is a choice that parents are encouraged to explore and explore well. Twenty states offer philosophical exemptions to vaccinations, and 48 states—all but Mississippi and West Virginia—offer religious exemptions. Karen points out that this line, "Vaccinations go against our sincerely held religious beliefs," allows parents to opt out of vaccinations for their child in most states.

This issue is inconvenient because it requires personal and political courage to challenge powerful special interests. Vaccines are a multibillion-dollar global growth business and a bright spot for the drug industry. Significant marketing resources are expended to promote vaccination and protect public confidence in the national childhood vaccine program. Many believe that parents who are concerned about vaccines are irrational. The truth, however, is that the way we vaccinate today is completely unprecedented in the history of mankind. Children today receive 70 doses of 16 vaccines. "This is a threefold increase in the past 25 years," Habakus said. "With over 50 percent of children chronically ill or at risk of developmental delays, it strikes me as supremely rational that parents are worried and asking questions."

### Big Business and "Public Interest" in Vaccination

Congress in 1986 passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act, which protects the pharmaceutical industry from most litigation related to vaccination, Habakus said. The Vaccine Injury Compensation Program has doled out more than \$2.5 billion in damages to more than 2,500 families whose children have died or sustained catastrophic injuries following vaccination. Compensation rulings go before administrators, described by Habakus as "special masters with

little to no legal experience." Families are not entitled to discovery or a jury of their peers. Most significant is the U.S. government's acknowledgement that vaccines can cause catastrophic harm and death. This is not disputed and runs counter to the primary narrative in mainstream media today that vaccines are safe.

The world market for vaccines is estimated to be about \$35 billion in 2014. Even with all this money, expansion of the vaccine market is identified by *Vaccine Epidemic* contributing writer Michael Belkin as one of the three prongs of the industry's survival strategy in the face of patent losses on blockbuster drugs. "In the stock market, pharmaceutical companies are no longer the gold-plated, recession-proof investments they once were," Belkin writes.

There's plenty more money to be made from vaccinations, and this money is in the health-care industry itself. The costs of raising children with ASD are enormous, totaling more than \$9 billion in 2011, according to the CDC website. It costs \$17,000 more to raise an autistic child in a single year in the United States compared with a child without ASD, according to the CDC. Average medical costs for Medicaid-enrolled children were almost \$11,000 a child, or six times as much compared with costs for children without ASD. In addition to medical costs, intensive behavioral interventions for children with ASD run \$40,000 to \$60,000 per child annually, CDC figures show. The cost of an autistic nation, though, is much greater.

It is outspoken advocates for vaccination and dietary choices such as Habakus, Arnold and Karen who are helping raise the consciousness of climbing incidence rates of autism spectrum disorder and other health conditions. All these and more voices are needed, what with lackluster coverage by mainstream media, where many still get their news. For example, *USA Today* in March, 2014 reported in a front-page story on autism titled "Autism Rates Soar, Now Affects 1 in 68 Children." "What's still unknown is the driver of that increase (30 percent ascension in ASD rates from 2008 to 2010). Many experts believe the rise is largely due to better awareness and diagnosis rather than a true increase in the number of children with the condition." The words "vaccine," "vaccination" or "diet" are not mentioned once in this 826-word article.

Life is a series of choices and, in some cases, our actions have irrevocable consequences. For parents, there could be no more important choice than whether to consent to this medical intervention for their children.

"You can't unvaccinate your child. If you're being pressured into making a fear-based decision, then it's not a good time to act. Take some time to research and investigate. Know that it's your choice." In highlighting the biggest takeaway from *Vaccine Epidemic*, Habakus accentuated, "Vaccination choice is a basic human right."