

# RYM WELLNESS X BUTTERFLY KIDS GROW

## NUTRITION GUIDE

### **NUTRITION IS NOT ABOUT PERFECTION IT IS ABOUT SUPPORT**

- For children with autism food can influence mood, emotional regulation, focus, digestion, energy levels, and sleep.
- Every child is different. This guide is designed to meet families where they are with simple realistic steps and tips that support long term well being.

### **UNDERSTANDING AUTISM AND NUTRITION**

- Many children on the autism spectrum experience sensory sensitivities, limited food preferences, digestive challenges, and strong routines around food.
- A helpful shift is to move away from trying to fix eating and instead focus on building trust with food.

### **HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH EATING**

- Start with familiar foods that your child already enjoys and feels safe eating.
- Introduce new foods slowly alongside preferred foods without removing safe options.
- Keep meals consistent with predictable timing and simple presentation.
- Use food pairing by combining a preferred food with a new food.
- Respect sensory preferences by adjusting textures through blending, chopping, or cooking methods.
- Allow exposure without pressure. It may take many attempts before a child is ready to try something new.

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**KNOWLEDGE. RESOURCES. ENCOURAGEMENT.**

## KEY NUTRIENTS TO FOCUS ON

- **Protein** supports growth, focus and stability. Sources include eggs, chicken, turkey, fish, beans, lentils, beef, and yogurt if tolerated.
- **Omega 3 fatty acids** support brain health and function. Sources include salmon, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and nuts.
- **Fiber** supports digestion and gut health. Sources include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- **Important vitamins and minerals** include zinc, magnesium, and iron, which support immune function, calming responses, and energy levels.

## GUT HEALTH AND OVERALL WELL BEING

- The gut and brain are closely connected.
- When gut health is disrupted, children may experience irritability, low energy, sleep challenges, and difficulty focusing.
- Support gut health through fiber rich foods, proper hydration, and foods that contain beneficial bacteria if tolerated.

## FOODS TO BE MINDFUL OF

- Highly processed foods, Artificial dyes, additives, sugar.
- Some children may respond differently to dairy or gluten. Parents can observe and determine what works best for their child.

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## SIMPLE MEAL IDEAS

- Smoothies that include fruits vegetables and protein sources.
- Rice or grain bowls with separate ingredients for comfort and familiarity.
- Protein pancakes made with simple whole ingredients.
- Snack plates that include a protein, a fruit, and a carbohydrate.
- Homemade versions of familiar favorites such as chicken tenders.

## SAMPLE 3 DAY MEAL PLAN

Meals can be adjusted based on preferences and sensory needs. Keep foods simple and separated when needed.

- **Day 1**
  - **Breakfast:** scrambled eggs with toast and strawberries
  - **Lunch:** chicken and rice with cucumbers on the side. Snack apple slices with peanut butter.
  - **Dinner:** baked salmon with potatoes and steamed broccoli.
- **Day 2**
  - **Breakfast:** smoothie with banana, berries, spinach, and protein source.
  - **Lunch:** turkey sandwich on whole grain bread, with carrots on the side. Snack yogurt with blueberries or dairy free alternative.
  - **Dinner:** ground turkey pasta with simple tomato sauce and side salad.
- **Day 3**
  - **Breakfast:** oatmeal with banana and chia seeds
  - **Lunch:** grilled chicken with rice and avocado slices Snack crackers with hummus
  - **Dinner:** baked chicken tenders with sweet potatoes and green beans

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## **ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS**

- Progress takes time and consistency matters more than perfection.
- Small steps create meaningful change over time.
- Building trust with food is a process and every effort counts.
- You are supporting your child in a powerful and meaningful way.

## **AFFIRMATIONS FOR PARENTS**

- I am doing the best I can and that is enough.
- I am learning what works for my child with patience and love.
- I release the pressure to be perfect and focus on progress.
- I trust myself to make decisions that support my child's well-being.
- I create a safe and supportive environment around food.
- I celebrate small wins because they lead to lasting change.

## **AFFIRMATIONS FOR KIDS**

- I am safe
- I am loved
- I can try new things when I am ready
- It is okay to go slow
- I can listen to my body
- My body is strong
- Food helps my body grow and feel good
- I can take one small bite
- I am allowed to say what I like and do not like
- I am learning every day

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