

BOGUS “LINK” BETWEEN ACETAMINOPHEN AND AUTISM

The Trump administration's new guidance that pregnant women limit use of acetaminophen is not based in science. It's also not the big “cause of autism” reveal that Trump promised. We're not letting their BS go unchecked. Here's what to say to those confused about this latest round of disinformation.

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH WANTING TO CURE AUTISM?”

- Autistic people are not broken. They experience the world differently and have strengths and struggles – just like every other human being on the planet – and no two autistic people are alike. They may need assistance (speech therapy, behavioral interventions, etc.), but many autistic people love the way their mind works.
- There's a difference between a complex spectrum disorder that may make certain aspects of life different or difficult and deadly diseases like polio or measles. Ironically, it was vaccines that eradicated the latter two illnesses, and thanks to RFK Jr. they might be making a comeback.
- RFK Jr. says untrue and outright bizarre things about autistic people, like they'll **never write a poem** or pay taxes. Of course he thinks they need a “cure.”
- **If you want to add color:** You know, a lot of people you have heard of and probably admire are on the autism spectrum, including climate activist Greta Thunberg, actor Anthony Hopkins (who was diagnosed in his 70s!), and renowned scientist Temple Grandin.

“HASN'T THERE BEEN A STEEP RISE IN CASES OF AUTISM? ISN'T THAT CAUSE FOR CONCERN?”

- Diagnoses of autism have increased but remember we now have an improved understanding of neurodiversity and more knowledgeable parents, teachers, and doctors. This is especially true for women and girls, who learn to mask their symptoms, so they are often misdiagnosed as other issues like anxiety or depression.
- In addition, improved recognition of autism is not necessarily a bad thing since it allows autistic kids and their parents to understand their diagnosis and seek available interventions and help.

“THEY’VE FOUND SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL – LEUCOVORIN. I HEARD IT HAS BEEN SHOWN TO TREAT AUTISM.”

- Leucovorin is a form of folic acid that is used for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. There is no robust evidence that it addresses symptoms of autism.
- In addition to being yet another unproven “cure,” it shows how the administration dehumanizes people with autism, reducing them to symptoms that need to be treated.
- **If you want to get geeky:** In small studies, leucovorin has shown some success in improving verbal ability in small numbers of people with autism. But verbal abilities are one struggle autistic people can face – it's not universal among autistic people and there is no consensus about the drug as an effective treatment for autism.

“THEY HAVE A STUDY BACKING THIS UP. SHOULDN’T WE LISTEN TO SCIENTISTS?”

- They’re not listening to scientists, though. They’re not even listening to one of the authors of the main review article they are citing who [said more research is needed](#) to determine if there is any causal relation between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and autism.
- In reality, scientists have studied acetaminophen’s supposed link to autism for decades and the science doesn’t match the administration’s claims. Tylenol is recommended because other pain medications can increase the risk of miscarriage. [Untreated fevers](#) during pregnancy can also increase miscarriage and preterm birth. That’s why [major medical organizations](#) like American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the [American Medical Association](#), and more say the new guidance is confusing and even dangerous.
- **If you want to get geeky:** A [study of nearly 2.5 million children](#) that used sibling control analysis found no evidence of increased risk of autism, ADHD, or intellectual disability associated with acetaminophen use during pregnancy. This suggests that associations observed in other models cited by RFK Jr. may have been attributable to a lack of sibling control analysis.

“WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PARENTS WHO WORRY ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN AND ARE DESPERATE TO DO MORE TO HELP?”

- The administration is giving these parents false hope for a magical “cure” through unproven science and spreading misinformation. How is that helping?
- Ironically, the Trump administration is taking away things – well-funded public schools, affordable childcare, expanded healthcare access, even social emotional learning in schools – that would help autistic kids and their parents. Instead, they are serving up snake oil.
- **If you want to give greater detail:** Now the administration announced they are awarding grants as part of the \$50 million Autism Data Science Initiative. To this point, the administration has cherry-picked data. Only time will tell what the hand-picked researchers will “find.”

[American Medical Association. “Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Sept. 22, 2025.” 26 Sept. 2025.](#)

[“Citing possible link to autism, Trump urges limiting use of Tylenol during pregnancy.” STAT News, 22 Sept. 2025.](#)

[“‘Highly concerning’: Major medical groups react to Trump’s claim that Tylenol is linked to autism.” ABC News, 23 Sept. 2025.](#)

[“Trump makes unfounded claims about Tylenol and repeats discredited link between vaccines and autism.” Associated Press, 23 Sept. 2025.](#)



Note on language: The autism community is diverse, including in its use of preferred language. In this resource, we have used identity-first language (“autistic person” as opposed to “person with autism”) but we acknowledge and respect that everyone has personal preferences and that language should adapt to the individual you are speaking to.