

The Defeat Autism Now (DAN!) project, created by the Autism Research Institute, created an approach to autism treatment called the "DAN! Protocol" based on the biomedical theory of autism. Many parents believe that DAN! doctors are the best choice to treat their children with autism, and there are many testimonials to the effectiveness of the treatments. DAN! doctors, however, do often prescribe treatments and diets that mainstream doctors question or even denounce.

What is the DAN! Protocol, and what are DAN! doctors?

Defeat Autism Now (DAN!) is a project of the Autism Research Institute, founded in the 1960's by Dr. Bernard Rimland. DAN! doctors are trained in the "DAN! Protocol," an approach to autism treatment which starts with the idea that autism is a biomedical disorder. Specifically, DAN! doctors feel that autism is a disorder caused by a combination of lowered immune response, external toxins from vaccines and other sources, and problems caused by certain foods. DAN! doctors are credentialed medical doctors who choose to attend a one-day DAN! training. There is no further credentialing, testing, or follow up.

What Do DAN! Doctors prescribe?

In an article called "Advice to Parents of Children with Autism," authors associated with the Autism Research Institute say:

Many physicians do not conduct extensive medical testing for autism, because they believe, incorrectly, that the only useful medical treatments are psychiatric medications to reduce seizures and behavioral problems.

Some of the major interventions suggested by DAN! practitioners include:

- Nutritional supplements, including certain vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and essential fatty acids
- Special diets totally free of gluten (from wheat, barley, rye, and possibly oats) and free of dairy (milk, ice cream, yogurt, etc.)
- Testing for hidden food allergies, and avoidance of allergenic foods
- Treatment of intestinal bacterial/yeast overgrowth (with pro-biotics, supplements and other non-pharmaceutical medications)
- Detoxification of heavy metals through chelation (a potentially hazardous medical procedure)