

# Red Flags for Referral to the Pediatric Specialist in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder



## **Metabolic red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- Regression after 2 years of age, multiple transient episodes of regression associated with illnesses, neurologic regression at any age
- Seizures or seizure-like events
- Unusually low energy level or low physical endurance most of the time
- Unusually tired or lethargic upon awakening in the morning
- Unusually clumsy or lethargic with routine illnesses (e.g., colds, low grade fever)
- Has had unusual response to anesthesia
- Has been diagnosed with hypoglycemia
- Failure to thrive, inadequate weight gain, unexplained weight loss
- Hypotonia, motor skills significantly delayed for developmental age
- Physical or neurologic findings suggestive of metabolic disorder

## **Genetic red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- Autism and developmental delay with multiple minor physical anomalies
- Multiplex family
- Physical features suggestive of a specific disorder, e.g., microcephaly and seizures in a girl with autism (Rett syndrome), or macrocephaly with/without lipomas, penile macules (PTEN mutation)

## **GI red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- Apparent recurrent abdominal pain/discomfort
- Recurrent spitting up, vomiting or food regurgitation
- Other signs of possible GER such as unexplained episodes of irritability during the day, appears hungry but refuses to eat after taking a few bites
- Recurrent:
  - Loose or watery stools
  - Straining (hard to pass) or urgency (rush to bathroom) with stools
  - Mucous and blood in stools
  - 2 or fewer BM's per week or pebble-like/hard stools
  - Gassiness, flatulence, bloating
- Regular night-time awakenings that continue after appropriate interventions for behaviorally-based sleep disorder
- Failure to thrive, inadequate weight gain, unexplained weight loss

- Persisting or unexplained severe behavior problems after discussion with Developmental Pediatrician

**Neurology red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- Regression after 2 years of age, multiple transient episodes of regression, neurologic regression at any age (consider metabolic disorder)
- Seizures or seizure-like events
- Regular nighttime awakenings, daytime sleepiness after appropriate interventions for behaviorally-based sleep disorder

**Sleep red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- **B**edtime problems (prolonged sleep latency, difficulty settling at night for sleep). Is it a problem?
- **E**xcessive daytime sleepiness.
- **A**wakenings during the night (1 or more awakenings more nights than not). Is it a problem?
- **R**egularity and duration of sleep (regular bedtime and regular awake time). What is the child's usual sleep duration\_\_\_\_\_hours?
- **S**leep-disordered breathing (regular loud snoring, respiratory pauses or apnea, gasping respirations, unusually restless sleep, unusual sleep position).

**Nutrition red flags: Does this child have any of the following.....?**

- Failure to thrive, inadequate weight gain, weight loss
- Marked food selectivity
- A special diet, e.g., gluten free and casein free diet

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