

The autism epidemic: RFK Jr. demands answers and questions science

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U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kennedy during his video address "Message to America" (C) U.S. Department of Health 03 2025

Robert F. Kennedy Jr, United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, sparked a debate with his recent comments on autism that is attracting attention far beyond the borders of the USA. In a series of public appearances in April 2025, Kennedy presented alarming figures, questioned the usual explanations for the rise in autism diagnoses and announced a comprehensive plan to research the causes of this "epidemic". He wants to use the resources of the US authorities to investigate the background thoroughly and with an open mind (including vaccinations!).

Kennedy has repeatedly referred to the rising autism rates in the USA in recent days. On April 16, 2025, during a press conference, he presented the latest data from the U.S. CDC: *"The prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in 8-year-old children is now 1 in 31. Shocking. For boys, the risk of an autism diagnosis in this country is 1 in 20."* The figures from California, where the rate for boys is 1 in 12.5 - a figure that Kennedy says probably reflects the national trend - are particularly worrying. Just two years ago, the national rate was 1 in 36, illustrating a dramatic increase.

Two days later, on April 18, 2025, Kennedy expanded on his analysis in an interview with host Hannity. He compared the current figures with his own childhood: *"Back then, the rate*

was 0.7 in 10,000 - less than 1 in 10,000." Today, Kennedy said, the rate has risen to about 1 in 36, and the new CDC data now shows 1 in 31. He finds the increasing severity of cases particularly alarming: *"About 25% of children with autism are nonverbal, unable to use the toilet independently, and exhibit stereotypical behaviors such as head-butting, biting, toe-walking and stimming ('self-stimulatory behavior,' note)." He emphasized that this proportion of severe cases with intellectual disabilities is increasing.*

Kennedy also pointed to social inequalities: *"In minority communities, the numbers are probably still under-represented, which masks the true extent of the problem."* In emotional terms, he described the impact on affected children and their families: *"These are children who shouldn't be suffering like this. Many of them were perfectly healthy and have regressed into autism at the age of two due to environmental exposure. They will never pay taxes, never have a job, never play baseball, never write a poem, never have a date. Many of them will never be able to use the restroom on their own."*

The "better diagnostics" theory: a myth?

Kennedy categorically rejects the common explanation that the rise in autism rates is due to better diagnostics or increased awareness. In his interview with Hannity on April 18, 2025, he said, *"The media has adopted this industry myth that we're seeing more autism because we recognize it better or because diagnostic criteria have changed."* He claims that *"study after study in the scientific literature over decades"* disproves this explanation.

To back up his thesis, he pointed to a 2013 study by the California legislature, which commissioned the MIND Institute at UC Davis to address this very question: "Is the increase real or are we just better at recognizing it?" According to Kennedy, the MIND Institute came to a clear conclusion, "Absolutely, this is a real epidemic. This is something we've never seen before."

He provided another argument with a 1987 study from North Dakota, which he mentioned on April 16. That study analyzed 180,000 children over 12 years and found that only one child was missed - proof, Kennedy said, that researchers at the time did not miss 98.8% of cases, as the "better diagnosis" theory would imply. "They didn't miss all those cases. The epidemic is real," he concluded.

Kennedy emphasized this point with a logical argument: *"If it was better detection, you'd see it in 70-year-old men. But we're not seeing that. This epidemic is only affecting our children."* For him, it is clear that the increase is not due to diagnostic improvements, but to a new, generation-specific cause.

Environmental factors instead of genes: focus on vaccines

Kennedy is convinced that the cause of the autism epidemic lies in environmental factors and rejects genetic explanations. On April 16, he said during the press conference: "This is a preventable disease. We know it's environmental. It has to be. Genes don't cause epidemics." He sharply criticized the National Institutes of Health (NIH): "The money and resources put into researching genetic causes - a dead end - have historically been 10 to 20 times greater than the resources put into studying environmental factors." For Kennedy, it's clear: "That's where we're going to find the answer, in environmental factors."

In his [interview with Hannity](#) on April 18, he went one step further and specifically named the factors he wants to investigate: *“We're going to look at mold, the age of the parents, food and food additives, pesticides, toxic exposures, medications. **We will investigate vaccines.** We're going to investigate everything.”* Although Kennedy does not explicitly claim that vaccines cause autism, his inclusion of vaccines in the list shows his willingness to explore this controversial area as well. He emphasized that he is approaching the matter “agnostically” - that is, without preconceived conclusions, with an open mind.

His plan: transparent research with a clear time frame

Kennedy has announced a detailed plan to get to the root of the autism epidemic. On April 18, he explained in the Hannity interview: “President Trump has asked me to find out what the cause is.” His approach is to be transparent and scientifically sound: *“We're going to contract out the studies to 15 leading research groups across the country. We will be transparent about our protocols and data sets, and each study will be replicated.”* This replication should ensure the reliability of the results.

The time frame is ambitious: *“I think we will have the first preliminary answers in six months. It will probably take another year before we have definitive answers because many of the studies don't start until the end of the summer.”* This means that **initial results are expected by October 2025**, while more comprehensive answers could be available by mid-2026. Kennedy emphasized that he is proceeding with an open mind: “I'm approaching this agnostically. We are looking at everything.”

For Kennedy, this is not just a scientific task, but a moral obligation: *“We have to recognize that we are doing this to our children, and we have to put an end to it,”* he said on 16 April. Report24 will be keeping a close eye on whether his comprehensive investigation - including the controversial issue of vaccines - will actually produce any new findings. In contrast to the eternal complainers and conspiracy theorists who look for and find the bad everywhere, we consider Kennedy to be the first real chance to change something about the existing system of “vaccinations” and actually make people healthier.

And: We don't care how much the “established media” rant and rave - because we know that they are directly or indirectly financed by the pharmaceutical industry and do not have the good in mind.