

## Oxytocin and autism: Could nasal spray boost social skills?

Treatment with the hormone oxytocin improves social skills in some children with autism, suggest results from a small clinical trial.

Oxytocin, dubbed the 'love hormone,' [enhances social behavior in animals](#). This effect makes it attractive as a potential autism treatment. But studies in people have been inconsistent: Some small trials have shown that the [hormone improves social skills](#) in people with autism, and others have shown no benefit. This may be because only a subset of people with autism respond to the treatment.

In the new study, researchers tried to identify this subset...In their new work, the researchers examined whether oxytocin levels in children with autism alter the children's response to treatment with the hormone. They found that low levels of the hormone prior to treatment are associated with the most improvement in social skills.

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Based on [Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS)] scores alone, oxytocin treatment did not lead to a statistically significant improvement in social skills. But when the researchers built a statistical model that accounted for the children's oxytocin levels at the trial's start, they found that the children who received oxytocin improved more on the SRS than did those on the placebo. The children with the lowest initial blood levels of oxytocin generally showed the most improvement.

*[Read the full study [here](#)]*

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Oxytocin spray boosts social skills in children with autism](#)**