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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

<http://www.depression-guide.com> | Teena

Autism Spectrum Disorder

To know better of ASD and its effects, learn the signs and ask for help if you're concerned.

What is autism spectrum disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a broad term which defines a group of developmental disorders. These disorders are defined by the following characteristics:

- Consistent problems with social communication and social interaction in all different types of settings
- Showing repetitive behaviors and cannot handle any change in routines everyday
- The symptoms of ASD start to show with the age of 2 years and continue for the rest of the life.
- The person becomes dependent on others for his daily life needs.
- Although ASD onset is in early development years, it can last throughout a person's lifetime.

The word "spectrum" is used to point to the wide range of symptoms, strengths, and levels of impairment which a person might have. It can include the following

1. Autistic disorder
2. Asperger's syndrome
3. Pervasive developmental disorder NOS (Not Otherwise Specified)

What are the signs and symptoms of ASD?

Below is the exhaustive list of all the symptoms of ASD. Please see that not all people with ASD will show all of these behaviors, but most patients will show several of these symptoms.

1. People with ASD can also have many strengths and abilities. For instance, people with ASD may:
 - ❖ Have above-average intelligence
 - ❖ Be able to learn things in detail and remember information for long periods of time
 - ❖ Be strong visual and auditory learners
 - ❖ Excel in math, science, music, and art
2. Repeat certain behaviors or have unusual behaviors
3. Have overly focused interests, such as with moving objects or parts of objects
4. Have a lasting, intense interest in certain topics, such as numbers, details, or facts
5. Be upset by a slight change in a routine or being placed in a new or over-stimulating setting

6. Make little or inconsistent eye contact
7. Tend to look and listen less to people in their environment
8. Rarely seek to share their enjoyment of objects or activities by pointing or showing things to others
9. Respond unusually when others show anger, distress, or affection
10. Fail or be slow to respond to their name or other verbal attempts to gain their attention
11. Have difficulties with the back and forth of conversations
12. Often talk at length about a favorite subject but won't allow anyone else a chance to respond or notice when others react indifferently
13. Repeat words or phrases that they hear, a behavior called echolalia
14. Use words that seem odd, out of place, or have a special meaning known only to those familiar with that person's way of communicating
15. Have facial expressions, movements, and gestures that do not match what they are saying
16. Have an unusual tone of voice that may sound sing-song or flat and robot-like
17. Have trouble understanding another person's point of view, leaving him or her unable to predict or understand other people's actions

Noticing ASD in Young Children

Some babies with ASD may seem different very early in their development. Others may seem to develop typically until the second or even third year of life, but then parents start to see problems.

How is ASD diagnosed?

Doctors diagnose ASD by looking at a child's behavior and development. Young children with ASD can usually be reliably diagnosed by age 2.

Older children and adolescents should be screened for ASD when a parent or teacher raises concerns based on observations of the child's social, communicative, and play behaviors.

Diagnosing ASD in adults is not easy. In adults, some ASD symptoms can overlap with symptoms of other mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). However, getting a correct diagnosis of ASD as an adult can help a person understand past difficulties, identify his or her strengths, and obtain the right kind of help.

What are the treatments for ASD?

Treating ASD early and getting proper care can reduce a person's difficulties and increase his or her ability to maximize strengths and learn new skills. While there is no single best treatment

for ASD, working closely with the doctor is an important part of finding the right treatment program.

Medications

There are a few classes of medications that doctors may use to treat some difficulties that are common with ASD. With medication, a person with ASD may have fewer problems with:

- Irritability
- Aggression
- Repetitive behaviors
- Hyperactivity
- Attention problems
- Anxiety and depression

Read more about the latest news and information on medication warnings, patient medication guides, or newly approved medications at the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) web site at www.fda.gov.

What causes ASD?

Scientists don't know the exact causes of ASD, but research suggests that genes and environment play important roles.

- Researchers are starting to identify genes that may increase the risk for ASD.
- ASD occurs more often in people who have certain genetic conditions, such as Fragile X syndrome or tuberous sclerosis.
- Many researchers are focusing on how genes interact with each other and with environmental factors, such as family medical conditions, parental age and other demographic factors, and complications during birth or pregnancy.
- Currently, no scientific studies have linked ASD and vaccines.