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# Autism Information

## Autism

Autism - or more precisely the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) - represents a broad group of developmental disorders characterized by impaired social interactions, problems with verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors, or severely limited activities and interests.

### *General Information*

- [Autism Spectrum Disorders Facts About ASDs](#) – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) autism spectrum disorders facts about autism, types of ASDs, signs and symptoms and other general information
- [NIMH Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) – National Institute of Mental Health general information about Autism.
- [NINDS Autism Information Page](#) – National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke autism general information page.
- [NHGRI symptoms of autism](#) – National Human Genome Research Institute general information about autism.
- [Autism](#) – Medline Plus general information about autism.

## Signs & Symptoms

ASDs begin before the age of three and last throughout a person's life, although symptoms may improve over time. Some children with an ASD show hints of future problems within the first few months of life. In others, symptoms might not show up until 24 months or later. Some children with an ASD seem to develop normally until around 18 to 24 months of age and then they stop gaining new skills, or they lose the skills they once had.

### *Learn more about symptoms*

- [Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASDs\)](#) – CDC autism spectrum disorder signs and symptoms include examples of the range of symptoms, possible 'red flags', social skill issues, communication skill issues, and other indicators.
- [Checklist of development skills](#) – CDC Developmental skills web site has an interactive milestones checklist.
- [NIMH Autism Indicators](#) – National Institute of Mental Health autism indicators.
- [NHGRI autism symptoms](#) – National Human Genome Research Institute information on symptoms.
- [Autism Symptoms](#) – Medline Plus information about signs and symptoms.

## Screening and Diagnosis

Diagnosing ASDs can be difficult since there is no medical test, like a blood test, to diagnose the disorders. Doctors look at the child's behavior and development to make a diagnosis. ASDs can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger. By age two, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable.

### *Learn more about screening and diagnosis*

- [Autism Screening and Diagnosis](#) – CDC Autism Spectrum Disorder screening and diagnosis information.
- [Screening and Diagnosis for Healthcare Providers](#) – CDC developmental screening and diagnostic tools.
- [Exams and tests](#) – Medline Plus information about exams and tests.

### **Treatments**

There is no single best treatment for all children with ASDs. There are many different types of treatments available, such as: auditory training, discrete trial training, vitamin therapy, anti-yeast therapy, facilitated communication, music therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and sensory integration.

### *Learn more about treatments*

- [Autism Treatments](#) - CDC information on early intervention services, types of treatments, behavior and communication approaches, dietary approaches, and medication.
- [Treatment of Children with Mental Illness](#) – National Institute of Mental Health information on mental disorder treatments for children.
- [Treatment](#) – Medline Plus information on treatments.

### **Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevalence**

We do not know all of the causes of ASDs. However, we have learned that there are likely many causes for multiple types of ASDs. There may be many different factors that make a child more likely to have an ASD, including environmental, biologic and genetic factors.

### *Learn more about causes, risk factors, and prevalence*

- [Causes and Risk Factors](#) – CDC information on causes and risk factors.
- [Is autism inherited](#) – National Human Genome Research Institute information on genetics and autism.
- [Understanding Risk Factors and Causes](#) – CDC research on risk factors and causes.
- [Data & Statistics](#) – CDC information on prevalence, risk factors, and characteristics, and economic costs associated with autism.

### *Relationship of vaccines and autism*

- [General Questions and Answers on Thimerosal](#) – CDC information on vaccines that contain thimerosal.
- [Thimerosal in Vaccines](#) – FDA information includes safety review of vaccines and neurodevelopmental disorders
- [Thimerosal in Vaccines Questions and Answers](#) – FDA information discusses reports examining vaccines and neurodevelopmental disorders
- [Immunization Safety Review: Vaccines and Autism](#) – Institute of Medicine report on vaccines and autism
- [Vaccines and autism](#) – CDC information on vaccines and autism.
- [Mercury and Vaccines \(Thimerosal\)\[DHHS1\]](#) – CDC information on thimerosal (preservative) found in vaccines and autism.
- [Relationship of vaccines and autism](#) – CDC information on the relationship between vaccines and autism.

- [Vaccine Safety](#) – CDC information on monitoring health problems after vaccination identifies possible vaccine side effects.

## Research and Clinical Trials

Several government agencies are involved in activities related to autism research.

- [CDC Features: Autism Research](#) – Overview of the CDC’s Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)
- [NIH Autism Research Network](#) – Single source of information on NIH research networks on autism
- [The Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism \(CPEAs\)](#) - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development provided funding for CPEAs to link scientists and families of people with autism to collect data on the genetics and outward characteristics of autism.
- [Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring \(ADDM\) Network](#) – CDC funded programs to determine the number of people with autism.
- [Centers for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology \(CADDRE\)](#) – CDC established regional centers of excellence for autism and other developmental disabilities.
- [Study to Explore Early Development \(SEED\)](#) – CDC funded study in the United States to help identify risk factors that may put children at risk for autism and other developmental disabilities.
- [Autism Clinical Trials](#) – National Institutes of Health [ClinicalTrials.gov](#) Website that catalogs results for autism clinical trials.

## Organizations

- [Autism Organizations](#) – National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke list of autism organizations
- [Autism Web sites](#) – CDC maintained links to other Web sites including those for families, financial resources for health care, assistive technology, healthcare providers, early intervention, educators, researchers, public and restricted-use data sets, and federal resources.