



# Autism

## Autism

Autism is a developmental disability that is a lifelong condition. It affects people's behavioral patterns and the way that they communicate in social situations and interact with the world. People with autism may have normal intelligence, higher intelligence or lower than average intelligence.

The degree to which someone is affected by autism varies from case to case, which is why the umbrella term 'autism spectrum disorder' has been adopted. The autism spectrum classifies the different levels of autism and the level of support a person may need at each given level.

## Frequency

An estimated 1 in 150 Australians are affected by autism. Males are 4 times more likely to have autism than females.

## Diagnosis

The diagnosis process involves being assessed by a team of qualified specialists. These specialists, such as a paediatrician or psychologist, will observe the person's communication skills and behavioral patterns.

Children as young as 2 may be diagnosed with autism. However, some children may not be diagnosed until later in life if the symptoms are subtle.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Delayed speech and delayed understanding of speech
- Lack of non-verbal communication
- Aggressiveness towards others or self
- Showing excessive behavioral patterns
- Being overly anxious about change
- Strong reactions to sound or other sensory inputs
- Displaying a strong fixed interest in certain things (e.g. toys or a specific topic)

## Treatment

The degree to which a person is affected by autism will determine the amount of treatment and support that they require. To attain the best possible outcome, a specifically tailored treatment program is required for each individual case.

Treatment may include:

- Educational programs
- Behavioral management therapy
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy

Support programs show the best results when started while a child is still young (early diagnosis is key).



## Contact IDEAS

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## Disclaimer

This fact sheet provides general information about the disability and is for informational purposes only. It is not a guarantee that you will meet the disability requirements in section 24 of the NDIS Act.

## References

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/autism>

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-autism/what-is-autism>

