



MDwise

A McLaren Company

Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism is one type of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), once known as pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). Other ASDs include Asperger's syndrome and childhood disintegration disorder (CDD).

All children with an ASD find it hard to interact with people. But behavior and symptoms can range from mild to severe. For example, your child might prefer to play alone and avoid eye contact. Or your child may be late to develop social or verbal skills.

One common symptom of children with ASDs is a fear of change. So your child may do things because of a need for comfort or sameness. For example, your child may rock his or her body. Or you may notice that your child gets attached to objects or repeats certain rituals and routines.

Some children with an ASD need help in most parts of their lives. Others attend school in a regular classroom and function at a high level.

Learning more about ASDs and getting treatment can help you and your child live the fullest lives possible.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

- Learn all you can about autism or other ASDs. The more you know, the easier it will be to care for your child.
- Ask your doctor about training on how to work with your child. This can reduce stress in your family. It can also help your child develop.
- Have your child take medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you have any problems with your child's medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- Work closely with your child's doctors. It is important that they take time to listen to your concerns.
- Work closely with others involved in your child's care and education. Your child will do best if you work as a team. Work together to set goals for:
 - School.
 - Behavior and interactions with family and other children.
 - Adjustment to different places.
 - Social and communication skills.

Take care of yourself

Learn how to deal with your own emotions, fears, and concerns. Try the following tips.

- Learn ways to relax. You may want to get involved in a hobby. Or it may help to visit with friends.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and support from others.
- Consider using respite care. This is a service that provides a break for parents and siblings.
- Find out about support groups for parents and siblings. It can really help to hear about the experiences of others. For more information on support groups in your area, contact the Autism Society of America at www.autism-society.org.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You think you may hurt your child or your child may hurt himself or herself.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child cannot control his or her behavior.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if your child has any problems.



©2007-2022 Healthwise, Incorporated. Healthwise disclaims any liability for use of this information, which does not replace medical advice. 2021-06-ut3151csp

RR2022_129 (11/2022)