

LEARN ABOUT

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

Important Note

Not all children with autism will have every sign listed here - every child is different!

Social Skills and Communication

Kids with autism may have a hard time talking and playing with others. Some signs to look for are:

- Doesn't look people in the eyes
- Doesn't respond to name by 9 months
- Don't smile or show different facial expressions by 9 months
- Doesn't play simple games like pat-a-cake by 12 months
- Doesn't show things they like to others by 15 months (like a toy)
- Doesn't point to things they find interesting by 18 months
- Does not notice when someone is hurt or upset by 2 years
- Doesn't join other kids in play by 3 years
- Don't sing, dance, or act in front of others by 5 years

Repeating Behaviors or Having Strong Interests

Kids with autism often have strong routines or do the same things over and over. Some signs are:

- Lines up toys or objects and gets upset if the order changes
- Repeats words or phrases
- Plays with toys the same way every time
- Pays close attention to one part of a toy (like a wheel)
- Gets very upset with small changes
- Has very strong interests in certain things
- Needs to follow the same routine every day
- Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins in circles
- Reacts in unusual ways to sounds, smells, tastes, or how things feel

Other Possible Signs

- Trouble learning to talk
- Trouble learning how to move (like walking or using hands)
- Trouble thinking or solving problems
- Trouble paying attention, sitting still, or acting without thinking
- Seizures (a health problem in the brain)
- Trouble with sleeping or eating
- Big mood changes or strong feelings