

## Schizophrenia



### Overview

This is a serious mental disorder. It affects the way you think. It can make it hard for you to manage your emotions. It can make you act strangely and it can disrupt your life.

### Causes and Risk Factors

We don't understand the exact cause of schizophrenia. It usually begins when you're between the ages of 16 and 30. It can run in families. There may be several genes that play a role in this disorder. It may also be linked to things in your environment. This includes things such as viruses and poor nutrition that affected your brain while you were still in the womb. And, it may be linked to a problem with the levels of chemicals that are in your brain.

### Symptoms

Schizophrenia can cause a wide range of symptoms. It can cause you to see and hear things that aren't there. We call these "hallucinations." You may believe things that aren't true. We call these "delusions." You may think in ways that aren't normal. You may have trouble understanding things and making decisions. It may be hard for you to focus or to pay attention. People who have schizophrenia may have trouble enjoying things that they should like. You may have trouble showing emotion. You may not speak very much. And you may move in ways that aren't normal, such as rocking or pacing.

### Treatment

Schizophrenia can be treated with medications. It can also be treated with talk therapy and with specialty care. Long term support can help you learn to manage your symptoms and have a stable life. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

