



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Facts

What is autism spectrum disorder? Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave and learn in ways that are different from most other people.

Diagnosing ASD 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.

ASD can sometimes be detected at age 18 months or younger. By age two, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered reliable. A child should be evaluated for autism if the child:

- Doesn't babble or coo by 12 months of age
- Doesn't point, wave, grasp or make other gestures by 12 months
- Doesn't say single words by 16 months
- Doesn't say two-word phrases on his or her own by 24 months
- Has any loss of any language or social skill at any age

Parents should rely on an evaluator with extensive background in autism spectrum disorder who can perform an in-depth observation.

Treatment There is currently no cure for ASD. However, research shows that early intervention treatment services can improve a child's development. Early intervention services help children from birth to three years old (36 months) learn important skills.

Children with autism may have high or low IQs. They may be chatty or silent, outgoing or shy, good or bad students. They may or may not have unusual talents. Some are easygoing, while others have severe behavior issues. So, what do they have in common? Delays or disabilities with social skills and emotional understanding of others.

Your BHS plan may include coverage for certain conditions and behavioral symptoms associated with autism. For more information about available resources and treatment options, call BHS at 800-245-1150.



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