




Schizophrenia

A disorder that affects a person's ability to think, feel, and behave clearly.

Common

More than 200,000 US cases per year

-  Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong
-  Requires a medical diagnosis

The exact cause of schizophrenia isn't known, but a combination of genetics, environment, and altered brain chemistry and structure may play a role.

Schizophrenia is characterized by thoughts or experiences that seem out of touch with reality, disorganized speech or behavior, and decreased participation in daily activities. Difficulty with concentration and memory may also be present.

Treatment is usually lifelong and often involves a combination of medications, psychotherapy, and coordinated specialty care services.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

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People may experience:

Behavioral: social isolation, disorganized behavior, aggression, agitation, compulsive behavior, excitability, hostility, repetitive movements, self-harm, or lack of restraint

Cognitive: thought disorder, delusion, amnesia, belief that an ordinary event has special and personal meaning, belief that thoughts aren't one's own, disorientation, memory loss, mental confusion, or slowness in activity

Mood: anger, anxiety, apathy, feeling detached from self, general discontent, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, elevated mood, or inappropriate emotional response

Psychological: hallucination, paranoia, hearing voices, depression, fear, persecutory delusion, or religious delusion

Speech: circumstantial speech, incoherent speech, rapid and frenzied speaking, or speech disorder

Also common: false belief of superiority, fatigue, impaired motor coordination, or lack of emotional response

Treatments**Treatment consists of medications and therapy**

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Medications

Antipsychotic: Reduces or improves the symptoms of certain psychiatric conditions.

- Chlorpromazine
- Haloperidol (Haldol Decanoate)
- Fluphenazine
- Risperidone (Risperdal, Risperdal Consta, and Risperdal M-TAB)
- Quetiapine (Seroquel and Seroquel XR)
- Ziprasidone
- Olanzapine (Zyprexa, Zyprexa Relprevv, and Zyprexa Zydis)
- Perphenazine
- Thioridazine
- Aripiprazole (Abilify, Abilify Maintena, and Aristada)
- Reserpine
- Prochlorperazine (Compro)
- Clozapine (Clozaril, FazaClo, and Versacloz)

Anti-Tremor: Helps control tremor, shaking, and unsteadiness.

- Benztropine (Cogentin)

Therapies

Support group: A forum for counseling and sharing experiences among people with a similar condition or goal, such as depression or weight loss.

Rehabilitation: Retraining the brain's pathways to improve mental and physical functioning after an illness or injury. For example, after a blow to the head (concussion).

Cognitive therapy: Talk therapy that focuses on replacing negative, distorted thoughts with positive, accurate ones.

Psychoeducation: Education about mental health that also serves to support, validate, and empower patients.

Family therapy: Psychological counseling that helps families resolve conflicts and communicate more effectively.

Behavior therapy: A therapy focused on modifying harmful behaviors associated with psychological distress.

Group psychotherapy: Talk therapy where the therapist works with clients in a group instead of one-on-one.

Specialists

Psychiatrist: Treats mental disorders primarily with medications.

Clinical psychologist: Treats mental disorders primarily with talk therapy.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)