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Autism Spectrum Disorder

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Autism Spectrum Disorder Information Page](#).

Autistic disorder (sometimes called autism or classical ASD) is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs).

Autistic children have difficulties with social interaction, display problems with verbal and nonverbal communication, and exhibit repetitive behaviors or narrow, obsessive interests. These behaviors can range in impact from mild to disabling. Autism varies widely in its severity and symptoms and may go unrecognized, especially in mildly affected children or when more debilitating handicaps mask it. Scientists aren't certain what causes autism, but it's likely that both genetics and environment play a role.

Autism spectrum disorder is diagnosed based on symptoms, signs, and other testing according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V, a guide created by the American Psychiatric Association to diagnose mental disorders. Children should be screened for developmental delays during periodic checkups and specifically for autism at 18- and 24-month well child visits.