

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIA



**SCHIZOPHRENIA** is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally. Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and can be disabling.

People with schizophrenia require lifelong treatment. Early treatment may help get symptoms under control before serious complications develop and may help improve the long-term outlook.

## SYMPTOMS

- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Disorganized thinking and speech
- Extremely disorganized or abnormal motor behavior
- Lack of ability to function
- Loss of interest in everyday activities
- Irritability or depressed mood
- Trouble sleeping

## CAUSES

- It's not known what causes schizophrenia, but researchers believe that a combination of genetics, brain chemistry and environment contributes to development of the disorder.

## RISKS

- Having a family history of schizophrenia
- Some pregnancy and birth complications
- Changes in behavior in the teen years which may or may not be connected to substance use.

**WHEN TO SEEK HELP** Diagnosing schizophrenia is not easy. The difficulty of diagnosing Schizophrenia is compounded by the fact that many people who are diagnosed do not believe they have it. Lack of awareness is a common symptom of people diagnosed with schizophrenia and greatly complicates treatment. To be diagnosed with schizophrenia, a person must have two or more of the following symptoms occurring persistently: Delusions, Hallucinations, Disorganized speech, Disorganized or catatonic behavior, Negative symptoms.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO** With medication, psychosocial rehabilitation and family support, the symptoms of schizophrenia can be reduced. People with schizophrenia should get treatment as soon as possible, because early detection can reduce the severity of their symptoms. Treatment options include: Antipsychotic medications and Psychotherapy.