

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM



Information handouts curated by our top experts

WHAT IS AUTISM?



- A person or child with Autism is neurologically different than typical people.
- This affects the way persons with Autism interact with the world around them.
- Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means every person diagnosed with Autism is different and have diverse skill sets and challenges.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

1. *Social Interaction and Communication:*

- Delay in speech and language development.
- Communication can range from no verbal output to excellent verbal fluency.
- Echolalia or verbal repetition of speech.
- Average eye contact during interaction.

2. *Thoughts, Feelings and Movements:*

- Different sensory perceptions (May be hyper or hypo sensitive to certain sensations around them).
- Repetitive movements such as hand flapping, rotating etc.,
- Difficulty coordinating body movements for everyday activities.
- Insistence on sameness such as same food, blanket or toy.



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WHO IS A PERSON WITH AUTISM?



- Autism is a lifelong disorder that emerges in the first year or two of life.
- According to the Centre for Disease Control, Autism affects an estimated 1 in 54 children today.
- A child with Autism grows up to be an adult with Autism.

WHY DOES AUTISM HAPPEN?

- There is no documented cause for Autism and hence, there is no medical cure for it.
- Research says, persons with Autism have different brain structure and function.



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WHAT ARE THE RED FLAGS THAT I SHOULD LOOK FOR?



- No or poor communication interaction.
- Regression of acquired speech skills.
- Minimal joint attention or eye contact during activities.
- Preference for routines and same things.
- Repetitive movements or spinning of objects.
- Strong reactions to sensations around him/her.
- Prefers to play alone.

WHO CAN DIAGNOSE AUTISM?

- Child Psychiatrist/ Psychologist
- Developmental Pediatrician
- Pediatric Neurologist



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WHO SUPPORTS PERSONS WITH AUTISM?



- If you suspect your child to have Autism, a multi-disciplinary healthcare team can support and assist you.
- A Psychologist, Speech-Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and a Special Educator are the go-to professionals.

MY CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM, NOW WHAT?

- Know that you are not alone in this journey.
- Seek early and intensive professional help for faster progress.





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info@1specialplace.com



+91 9760226001



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