

# Autism

Autism is a developmental disorder that affects an individual's development of communication and social skills. Currently, autism affects 1 in 110 children, and boys are affected 3-4 times more than girls.

The causes of autism are unclear, however, genetic factors appear to be very important – identical twins are more likely to have autism than fraternal twins or siblings. Chromosomal abnormalities and neurological issues are also more common in families with autism.

Other suspected, but unproven causes involve: diet, digestive tract changes, mercury poisoning, inability to properly use vitamins and minerals, and vaccination sensitivity. However, the worry that the small amount of mercury (thimerosal) in some multi-dose vaccines has been proven untrue.

Varieties of symptoms exist for autism, and exist from a moderate to severe degree. People with autism may:

1. Experience extreme sensitivity with hearing, sight, touch, smell, or taste.
2. Be distressed when routines are changed.
3. Show repeated body movements.
4. Have unusual attachments.
5. Display communicative abnormalities such as difficulty starting or maintaining a conversation or difficulty referring to the self correctly.
6. Respond unusually to sensory information.
7. Prefer solitary play.

If you have questions about autism or would like to get connected with resources, please call us at Personal Health Partners, 800-327-7272.

