

FACTS ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIA

WHAT IS SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia is a complex and debilitating disorder, which can affect a person in several ways such as irrational perceptions of reality, strange ideas or beliefs, disorganised speech or unusual body movements.

Schizophrenia may be experienced as episodes or as a chronic condition. It is both difficult for those experiencing the disorder and those around them such as family, friends and carers.

Males are at a higher risk than females and the average age of onset is 18-25 years for males, and 25-30 for females. Around 1% of the population will experience schizophrenia at some stage.

There are different types of schizophrenia, each with varying symptoms that differ from person to person. Common types of schizophrenia include paranoid, disorganised and catatonic.

SYMPTOMS

- Lack of control
- Hypersensitivity
- Apathy
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Paranoia
- Feeling isolated
- Indifference
- Detached
- Emptiness
- A sense of hopelessness
- Confused and disordered thinking

- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Inattention
- Apathy
- Difficulty speaking
- Strange or inappropriate gestures
- Reduced self-care
- Social withdrawal
- Inappropriate affect

CAUSES

Whilst the direct cause of schizophrenia is unknown, it is suggested that it may be due to a combination of factors, which includes genetic vulnerability, biology, stressful life events and drug misuse. Whilst these factors have been linked with schizophrenia, their individual contribution to the illness is unclear.

TREATMENT

- Medication
- Psychological intervention
- Psychiatric treatment
- Lifestyle support

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

It is important to seek appropriate assistance in order to effectively manage and treat schizophrenia.

Limiting the use of alcohol and other drugs that can trigger episodes can also assist in recovery.

If you notice any symptoms of schizophrenia within yourself, it is best to seek help from a health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or general practitioner.

HOW CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS HELP?

To assist in the recovery process it is vital for family and friends to express understanding, empathy and support.

While some people may primarily need emotional support and understanding, others may require physical help with their daily functioning.

It has been suggested that providing a structured and stable living environment can help reduce stress, which in turn may help to prevent, relapse or reduce symptoms.

It may be helpful to educate family and friends about schizophrenia to assist them in supporting you.

REFERRAL/SUPPORT INFO

Drug ARM 1300 656 800
info@drugarm.com.au
drugarm.com.au

Drug ARM Central Intake
07 3620 8880

Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
24/7 crisis support

Or contact your local GP (General Practitioner)

REFERENCES

1 Health Direct (2016). Schizophrenia. Retrieved from <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/schizophrenia>



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