

Schizophrenia

What is it? Schizophrenia is a chronic disease of the brain. People with this condition lose contact with reality. Living in a confusing world causes them fear, anxiety, and isolation. They have difficulty thinking and expressing themselves clearly, managing emotions, making decisions, and interacting with others. The specific causes of schizophrenia are still unknown, but it is believed to be related to genetic or hereditary factors and abnormal levels of some chemicals in the brain that influence our thoughts and emotions.

What are the symptoms of schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia includes a variety of symptoms, but they usually include:

- **Delusions:** They are false beliefs that are not based on reality. For example, they think they are deceived, persecuted, poisoned or that others are plotting a plan against them.
- **Hallucinations:** When a person sees, hears, smells, knows, or feels things that are not real.
- **Thought Difficulty:** When a person has strange ways of thinking. They may lose the ability to talk and have a conversation. They get easily distracted; They have problems organizing ideas.
- **Disorganized thinking;** when a person has strange ways of thinking. They may lose the ability to talk and have a conversation. They get easily distracted and have problems organizing ideas.
- **Disorganized Behavior:** This can manifest itself in different ways, it can include resistance to instructions, strange postures, a complete lack of response or useless and excessive movement.
- **Negative Symptoms:** This is the inability or reduced ability to perform normally. The person can neglect personal hygiene, isolate themselves; lose interest in daily activities and the ability to experience pleasure.

How can you help yourself? Recommendations for the patient and family

There are treatments that can help with the symptoms:

- Psychological treatment combined with medication can help to manage the symptoms of schizophrenia.
- Always have medications and take them as directed by your doctor.
- Have a balanced diet
- Sleep well and exercise
- Do not use drugs or alcohol
- Have positive thoughts

Friends and Family Support

If someone significant for you has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, know that you are not alone and that there are many ways in which you can help with the treatment.

- Know and learn everything you can about the condition.
- Encourage them to attend their medical appointments and keep their treatment.
- Remind them to take their medications properly.
- Emphasize the importance of personal hygiene and help you maintain good hygiene.
- Understand that the images they see and the voices they hear are very real to them; So, you

should not make fun, criticize, judge, or be alarmed.

- Avoid making too many demands or accusing them of making things up.
- Encourage their participation in recreational activities.
- Pay attention to comments on ideas or suicidal thoughts.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of relapse.

Note that...

Each person has signs before a relapse. Some can get very suspicious, worry that others are talking about them, they express strange ideas, isolate themselves, and become irritable.

- Immediately inform the doctor and his family of any threat the patient makes.
- Look for family support groups so you don't feel alone and understand better the condition to help the patient live a better life.
- The most successful caregivers and families are those who seek and accept all the support they can get.

Remember

- Schizophrenia is a chronic disease of the brain that can include a variety of symptoms.
- Psychological treatment combined with medication can help to manage the symptoms of schizophrenia.
- If someone significant to you has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, know that you are not alone and that there are many ways in which you can help with the treatment

Contact your Primary Physician

It is possible that before this type of diagnosis your quality of life is altered. Contact your primary physician for more information or counseling on how you and your family can address physical and emotional concerns about schizophrenia. If you are diagnosed with schizophrenia, you could benefit from the High Cost-High Needs Program. Through this Program, you could receive all the care you need to meet your health care needs.

Talking to your health service provider about your needs will help you understand the best way to assist you in managing your health condition.

Your primary doctor and / or your specialist can provide information about the benefits of this Program.

Important

If you need physical or mental health emergency services, you can dial 9-1-1, or visit the nearest emergency room.

If you have any symptoms that you understand require immediate attention, before visiting an emergency room, you can contact the Medical Advice Line toll-free at 1-844-347-7801, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) Days of the week. TTY / TDD users should call 1-844-347-7804. By calling the Medical Advice Line before visiting an emergency room, you will be exempt from paying the copayment for services received during your visit to the emergency room.

For additional information

Customer Service Department
1-844-347-7800
TTY / TDD 1-844-347-7805
Visit our website
www.firstmedicalvital.com

References

American Psychiatric Association: Desk reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DMS-5. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013.
NIHM (2015) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml>.
OMS (2018). <https://www.who.int/es/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/schizophrenia>
Mayo Clinic <https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/schizophrenia/symptoms-causes/syc-2035444>