

Schizophrenia

Fact: Schizophrenia affects about 1% of the U.S. population – that’s about 3 million people. It knows no racial, cultural or economic boundaries. Symptoms usually appear between the ages of 13 and 25, and often appear earlier in males than in females.

Schizophrenia is a serious disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. Someone who has schizophrenia may have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is imaginary; may be unresponsive or withdrawn; and may have difficulty expressing normal emotions in social situations.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, schizophrenia is not “split personality” or multiple personality. The vast majority of people who have schizophrenia are not violent and do not pose a danger to others. Research suggests that the causes include genetics (heredity), biology (an imbalance in the brain’s chemistry); and possible viral infections and immune disorders.

What are the early warning signs of schizophrenia?.

Warning Signs of schizophrenia include:

- Hearing or seeing something that isn’t there
- A constant feeling of being watched
- Peculiar or nonsensical way of speaking or writing
- Strange body positioning
- Feeling indifferent to important situations
- Deterioration of academic or work performance
- A change in personal hygiene and appearance
- A change in personality
- Increasing withdrawal from social situations
- Irrational, angry or fearful responses to loved ones
- Inability to sleep or concentrate
- Inappropriate or bizarre behavior
- Extreme preoccupation with religion or the occult

What are the different types of schizophrenia?

- **Paranoid schizophrenia** – The person feels extremely suspicious, persecuted or grandiose, or experiences a combination of these emotions.
- **Disorganized schizophrenia** – The person is often incoherent in speech and thought but may not have delusions.
- **Catatonic schizophrenia** – The person is withdrawn, mute and negative, and often assumes very unusual body positions.

www.mhawisconsin.org

What You Need to Know...



- **Residual schizophrenia** – The person is no longer experiencing delusions or hallucinations but has no motivation or interest in life.
- **Schizoaffective disorder** – The person has symptoms of both schizophrenia and a major mood disorder such as depression.

What treatments are available for schizophrenia?

The types of services that can help a person with schizophrenia include:

- Case management, which helps people access services, financial assistance, treatment and other resources.
- Psychosocial rehabilitation programs, which help people regain skills such as obtaining and maintaining employment, cooking, cleaning, budgeting, shopping, socializing, problem solving and stress management.
- Self-help groups, in which individuals who have mental illnesses themselves provide ongoing support and information to other people with mental illnesses.
- Drop-in centers, which are places where individuals with mental illness can socialize, and receive informational support and services on an as-needed basis.
- Housing programs, which offer a range of support and supervision from 24-hour supervised living to drop-in support, as needed.
- Employment programs, which assist individuals in finding employment and gaining the skills necessary to re-enter the workforce.
- Therapy/counseling, which includes different forms of “talk” therapy, such as individual and group therapies, that can help both the patient and family members to better understand the illness and share their concerns.
- Crisis services include 24-hour hotlines, after-hours counseling, residential placement and in-patient hospitalization.

Medication: Antipsychotic medications can help people with schizophrenia to live fulfilling lives.

- New Generation (also called atypical) antipsychotic treat both the positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia, often with fewer side effects than “conventional” antipsychotic.
- Conventional antipsychotic effectively control the “positive” symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and the confusion associated with schizophrenia.

For more information, contact Mental Health America of Wisconsin at 414.276.3122, or via Email: info@mhawisconsin.org.

Mental Health America is a United Way of Greater Milwaukee Agency.



www.mhawisconsin.org