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## **What are Pervasive Developmental Disorders?**

Pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) are actually a diagnostic category that specifically refers to a group of disorders characterized by delays in the development of socialization and communication skills. These disorders are sometimes known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). Parents and caregivers may notice symptoms as early as infancy; however the typical age of onset is usually before age three. Types of PDD include Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, childhood Disintegrative Disorder, and Rett's Syndrome. Individuals with PDD vary widely in abilities, intelligence, and behaviors. Some individuals do not speak at all, others speak in limited phrases or conversations, and some have relatively normal language development. Other characteristics include: repetitive routines or rituals; odd speech and language; socially and emotionally inappropriate behavior; the inability to interact successfully with peers; and problems with non-verbal communication. Unusual responses to sensory information, such as loud noises and lights, are also common.

The following is a list of some general characteristics:

- problems with using and understanding language
- difficulty relating to people, objects, and events
- unusual play with toys and other objects
- difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings
- repetitive body movements or behavior patterns

## **Is there any treatment?**

There is no known cure for PDD. Medications are used to address specific behavioral problems. Therapy for individuals with PDD should be specialized according to need. Some individuals with PDD benefit from specialized classrooms or work environments in which the group size is small and instruction is given on a one-to-one basis. Others may function well in standard special education classes, regular classes with additional support, or competitive employment with job coaching.

## **What is the likely outcome for an individual diagnosed?**

Adolescent individuals with ADS may experience depression, anxiety or behavioral problems. Additional treatment to address these concerns may be needed. For many individuals, autism symptoms may improve with treatment and age. People with ASD usually continue to need services and supports as they get older, but many are able to work successfully and live independently or within a supportive environment.

## **Related Fact Sheets**

# Asperger Syndrome Fact Sheet Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder Fact Sheet

## Organizations

### National Dissemination Center for Individuals with Disabilities

U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Special Education Programs

1825 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20009

[nichcy@aed.org](mailto:nichcy@aed.org)

<http://www.nichcy.org>

Tel: 800-695-0285 202-884-8200

Fax: 202-884-8441

### National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders Information Clearinghouse

1 Communication Avenue

Bethesda, MD 20892-3456

[nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov](mailto:nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov)

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov>

Tel: 800-241-1044 800-241-1055 (TTD/TTY)

### MAAP Services for Autism, Asperger Syndrome, and PDD

P.O. Box 524

Crown Point, IN 46307

[info@maapservices.org](mailto:info@maapservices.org)

<http://www.maapservices.org>

Tel: 219-662-1311

Fax: 219-662-0638

### Autism Research Institute (ARI)

4182 Adams Avenue

San Diego, CA 92116

[director@autism.com](mailto:director@autism.com)

<http://www.autismresearchinstitute.com>

Tel: 866-366-3361

Fax: 619-563-6840

### National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)

P.O. Box 1968

(55 Kenosia Avenue)

Danbury, CT 06813-1968

[orphan@rarediseases.org](mailto:orphan@rarediseases.org)

<http://www.rarediseases.org>

Tel: 203-744-0100 Voice Mail 800-999-NORD (6673)

Fax: 203-798-2291

### National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

National Institutes of Health, DHHS

6001 Executive Blvd. Rm. 8184, MSC 9663

Bethesda, MD 20892-9663

[nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto:nimhinfo@nih.gov)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Tel: 301-443-4513/866-415-8051 301-443-8431 (TTY)

Fax: 301-443-4279

### National Institute of Individual Health and Human Information Resource Center

P.O. Box 3006

Rockville, MD 20847

[NICHDIInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov](mailto:NICHDIInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov)

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov>

Tel: 800-370-2943 888-320-6942 (TTY)

Fax: 301-984-1473

### Autism Network International (ANI)

P.O. Box 35448

Syracuse, NY 13235-5448

[jjsincla@syr.edu](mailto:jjsincla@syr.edu)

<http://www.ani.ac>

### Autism National Committee (AUTCOM)

P.O. Box 429

Forest Knolls, CA 94933

<http://www.autcom.org>

### American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

2200 Research Boulevard

Rockville, MD 20850

[actioncenter@asha.org](mailto:actioncenter@asha.org)

<https://asha.org>

Tel: 800-638-8255

Fax: 301-571-0457

*This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. The Arc of Monroe disclaims any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.*

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MAAP Services for Autism, Asperger Syndrome, and PDD