

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a serious brain illness. People who have it may hear voices that aren't there. They may think other people are trying to hurt them. Sometimes they don't make sense when they talk. The disorder makes it hard for them to keep a job or take care of themselves.



Symptoms of schizophrenia usually start between ages 16 and 30. Men often develop symptoms at a younger age than women. People usually do not get schizophrenia after age 45. There are three types of symptoms:



- **Psychotic symptoms** distort a person's thinking. These include hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that are not there), delusions (beliefs that are not true), trouble organizing thoughts, and strange movements.
- **"Negative" symptoms** make it difficult to show emotions and to function normally. A person may seem depressed and withdrawn.
- **Cognitive symptoms** affect the thought process. These include trouble using information, making decisions, and paying attention.

No one is sure what causes schizophrenia. Your genes, environment, and brain chemistry may play a role.

There is no cure. Medicine can help control many of the symptoms. You may need to try different medicines to see which works best. You should stay on your medicine for as long as your doctor recommends. Additional treatments can help you deal with your illness from day to day. These include therapy, family education, rehabilitation, and skills training.

