



UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism affects how people see the world and connect with others. Every autistic person is unique, with their own strengths and challenges. Also called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it varies by age and abilities.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS?

- ✓ The first signs of autism may be delayed or different ways of talking and difficulty playing or interacting with others.
- ✓ Children might take longer to learn to talk or use words in a different way. They may also use less eye contact, pointing, and using gestures to communicate.
- ✓ Carers might see children repeat the same actions or movements during play or focus on unusual aspects of toys.
- ✓ A child can also start to show unusual sensitivity or lack of sensitivity to sounds, textures, pain or light.
- ✓ They may find it hard to make lasting friends, feel very anxious, and focus strongly on certain ideas or interests.
- ✓ Some children have challenges in primary school. They can express their needs well but may find it hard to share information or join conversations. They might also prefer to play on their own instead of with others.
- ✓ Autistic children often have special interests in certain things, like collecting sticks, trains, football stats, or learning about underwater animals. These interests are very important to them and bring a lot of joy.
- ✓ They might like their surroundings to stay the same, such as eating only certain textured foods or wearing the same clothes every day.
- ✓ They may find changes or transitions hard and overwhelming.



WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR?



- ✓ If you're worried about your child, talk to your GP and ask for a referral to a specialist, psychologist or paediatrician. Do not try to make a diagnosis yourself.
- ✓ Every child with Autism is different, and signs can vary a lot. That is why there isn't just one test to diagnose Autism.
- ✓ Treatment varies for each child and family and usually changes over time.

AFTER A DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

- ✓ Counselling may help you to manage your own feelings about your child's diagnosis.
- ✓ Other parents who have children on the autism spectrum can be excellent sources of information.

MORE SUPPORT SERVICES

- ✓ For more information and support, contact **Amaze** which has a list of **support groups in Victoria** on their website.
- ✓ **TherapyConnect** is a resource created by Amaze to help families of young autistic children understand the therapy and what to expect.



Evidence suggests that there is NO link between autism and childhood vaccines.

Scan the QR code
to know more



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