

## Autism Awareness Month

*“Autism is not a choice. Acceptance is. Imagine if the opposite was true.”*



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**A**utism, also called autism spectrum disorder, is a serious developmental disorder that impairs the ability to communicate and interact. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. Every year, April is celebrated as Autism awareness month in U. S. since 1972 whereas “World Autism awareness day” is celebrated on second day of April every year. Autism Awareness Month emphasizes the need for public awareness to promote acceptance, celebrate the differences, and be more inclusive toward autistic individuals around us.

Autism is a spectrum disorder; each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges, from low functioning to high functioning.

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association merged four distinct autism diagnoses into one umbrella diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They included Autistic disorder, Childhood disintegrative disorder, Pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified

(PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. Research suggests autism develops from a combination of genetic and non-genetic or environmental influences.

Signs of autism usually appear by age 2 or 3. Some children show signs of autism spectrum disorder in early infancy, such as reduced eye contact, lack of response to their name, or indifference to caregivers. Children and adults with autism have difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication. They may have problems in speaking languages, making eye contact, and showing expressions or emotions. Another important sign of autism is repetitive behavior.

What causes Autism?

Autism is a disorder occurred due to various genetic and environmental risk factors. According to Research, autism tends to run in families. Changes in certain genes increase the risk that a child will develop autism. If a parent carries one or more of these gene changes, they may get passed to a child (even if the parent does not have autism). Other times, these genetic changes arise spontaneously in an early embryo or

the sperm and/or egg that combine to create the embryo. Again, the majority of these gene changes do not cause autism by themselves. They simply increase the risk for the disorder.

In addition to the above risk factors, some other risk factors are :

Advanced age of parents,

Pregnancy and birth complications,

Pregnancy spaced less than one year apart.

Although, vaccines have no role in Autism as it was suspected.

According to CDC reports, Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls. The bitter fact is that there is no medical detection for autism. So in a country like India, a lack of Awareness of Autism leads to low statistics as a result of low screening, but also a lack of required treatment. For a better prognosis, early detection is required.

Sadly, there's no cure for Autism till now. The goal of treatment is to improve the ability of a patient to function. Autism treatment consists of various therapies. Behavior and

communication therapies, Educational therapies, family therapies, and some others are recommended. No medication can improve the core signs of autism spectrum disorder, but specific medications can help control symptoms. Children with autism spectrum disorder typically continue

to learn and compensate for problems throughout life, but most will continue to require some level of support. Autism awareness month is celebrated for the support of all autistic children and adults out there.

“They’re not different, so don't be indifferent to them.”