

APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is over 4 times more common among boys than among girls. Autism is a complex, developmental disability that normally appears in early childhood and can impact a person's social skills, ability to communicate and more. The following guide has been prepared to provide information on the prevalence of autism, symptoms, and how caregivers can find support.

01 | Prevalence

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 54 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). ASD is over 4 times more common among boys than among girls.

02 | Symptoms & Diagnosis

The disorder's symptoms vary widely. They may appear in infancy, but usually become clearer during early childhood. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has developed a detailed list of behaviors, listed in four main categories:

- Communication
- Social behavior
- Stereotyped behavior
- Other behavior

During developmental screening and observation, a child's doctor can use this list to determine areas of concern. When symptoms are evident, a team of specialists will work with the patient to confirm a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each patient has very unique abilities and challenges. Therefore, the treatment plan will need to be tailored to address the patient's specific needs.

03 | Finding Support

Each family has distinct needs and deals with stressful situations differently. Here are some tips for coping and finding support:

- **Ask for help** – do not hesitate to use the support available to you from the people around you.

- **Join a support group** – listening to others with similar experiences can provide comfort and encouragement.
- **Take a break** – even if it is only for a few minutes, allow yourself to take some time away.
- **Keep a journal** – some parents have found a journal to be a helpful tool for keeping track of their child's progress, what is working and what is not.

Learn more about autism disorder and how to get involved in raising awareness: <https://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>

Did You Know?

1 in 54 children are diagnosed with autism, up from 1 in 125 just 10 years ago.

References:

<https://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>

<https://www.autismawarenessmonth.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/caring-caregiver>