# AUTISM

This guide can help if you or someone you care about is autistic or might be autistic.

**What is autism?**

**Autistic people may act in a different way to other people**

Autistic people may:

* find it hard to communicate and interact with other people
* find it hard to understand how other people think or feel
* find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming, stressful or uncomfortable
* get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events
* take longer to understand information
* do or think the same things over and over

If you think you or your child may be autistic, get advice about the [signs of autism](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/).

**Autism is not an illness**

Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It means your brain works in a different way from other people.

It's something you're born with. Signs of autism might be noticed when you're very young, or not until you're older.

If you're autistic, you're autistic your whole life.

Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a "cure". But some people need support to help them with certain things.

**Autistic people can live a full life**

Being autistic does not have to stop you having a good life.

Like everyone, autistic people have things they're good at as well as things they struggle with.

Being autistic does not mean you can never make friends, have relationships or get a job. But you might need extra help with these things.

**Autism is different for everyone**

Autism is a spectrum. This means everybody with autism is different.

Some autistic people need little or no support. Others may need help from a parent or carer every day.

**Some people use other names for autism**

There are other names for autism used by some people, such as:

* autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is the medical name for autism
* Asperger's (or Asperger syndrome) is used by some people to describe autistic people with average or above average intelligence

**Asperger Syndrome**

People with Asperger's do not have the same learning disabilities that many people with autism have, but they might have a specific learning difficulty.

Some people call this "high-functioning" autism.

Doctors do not diagnose people with Asperger's anymore because it's now thought of as part of autism spectrum disorder. But if you were diagnosed with it before, this will stay as your diagnosis.

**It's not clear what causes autism**

Nobody knows what causes autism, or if it has a cause.

It can affect people in the same family. So it may sometimes be passed on to a child by their parents.

Autism is:

* not caused by bad parenting
* not caused by vaccines, such as the MMR vaccine
* not linked to diet
* not an infection you can spread to other people

**Autistic people can have any level of intelligence**

Some autistic people have average or above average intelligence.

Some autistic people have a learning disability. This means they may find it hard to look after themselves and need help with daily life.

**Autistic people may have other conditions**

Autistic people often have other conditions, such as:

* attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
* dyslexia
* anxiety
* depression
* epilepsy

**Find out more**

* [NHS autism guide](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/)
* [National Autistic Society: what is autism?](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism)
* [Ambitious about Autism: what is autism?](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/understanding-autism/what-is-autism)

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# Signs of Autism

Find out what the main signs of autism are and if you should get advice.

[Signs of autism - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/signs/>

**Signs of Autism in Children**

**Autism in young children**

Signs of autism in young children include:

* not responding to their name
* avoiding eye contact
* not smiling when you smile at them
* getting very upset if they do not like a certain taste, smell or sound
* repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands, flicking their fingers or rocking their body
* not talking as much as other children
* not doing as much pretend play
* repeating the same phrases

**Autism in older children**

Signs of autism in older children include:

* not seeming to understand what others are thinking or feeling
* unusual speech, such as repeating phrases and talking ‘at’ others
* liking a strict daily routine and getting very upset if it changes
* having a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities
* getting very upset if you ask them to do something
* finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on their own
* taking things very literally – for example, they may not understand phrases like "break a leg"
* finding it hard to say how they feel

**Autism in girls and boys**

Autism can sometimes be different in girls and boys.

Autistic girls may:

* hide some signs of autism by copying how other children behave and play
* withdraw in situations they find difficult
* appear to cope better with social situations
* show fewer signs of repetitive behaviours

This means autism can be harder to spot in girls.

[The National Autistic Society has more information about autistic women and girls](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/autistic-women-and-girls)

**Get Advice if you think your child might be autistic.**

You could speak to:

* a GP
* a health visitor (for children under 5)
* any other health professional your child sees, such as another doctor or therapist
* special educational needs (SENCO) staff at your child's school

Getting diagnosed can help your child get any extra support they might need.

[Find out how to get diagnosed](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/)

[Signs of autism in children - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/children/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/signs/children/>

**Signs of Autism in Adults**

**Main signs of autism**

Common signs of autism in adults include:

* finding it hard to understand what others are thinking or feeling
* getting very anxious about social situations
* finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on your own
* seeming blunt, rude or not interested in others without meaning to
* finding it hard to say how you feel
* taking things very literally – for example, you may not understand sarcasm or phrases like "break a leg"
* having the same routine every day and getting very anxious if it changes

**Other signs of autism**

You may also have other signs, like:

* not understanding social "rules", such as not talking over people
* avoiding eye contact
* getting too close to other people, or getting very upset if someone touches or gets too close to you
* noticing small details, patterns, smells or sounds that others do not
* having a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities
* liking to plan things carefully before doing them

**Autism in women**

Autistic women may be more likely to:

* have learned to hide signs of autism to 'fit in' - by copying people who do not have autism
* be quieter and hide their feelings
* appear to cope better with social situations
* show fewer signs of repetitive behaviours

This means it can be harder to tell you're autistic if you're a woman.

[The National Autistic Society have more information about autistic women and girls](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/autistic-women-and-girls)

**:**

**See a GP if you may be autistic.**

If you already see a health professional, such as another doctor or therapist, you could speak to them instead.

Getting diagnosed can help you get any extra support you might need.

[Find out how to get diagnosed](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/)

[Signs of autism in adults - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/adults/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/signs/adults/>

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# Getting Diagnosed as Autistic

Find out how to get diagnosed as autistic and how a diagnosis can be helpful.

[Getting diagnosed as autistic - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/>

# How to get an autism assessment

## 1. Talk to someone for advice

If you think you or your child have [signs of autism](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/), the next step is to talk to someone about it.

You could speak to:

* a GP
* a health visitor (for children under 5)
* any other health professional you or your child see, such as another doctor or therapist
* special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) staff at your child's school

Ask them about referring you or your child for an autism assessment.

An assessment is done by autism specialists. It's the only way to find out if you or your child are autistic.

### **Tips for when you speak to someone**

**Do:**

* write a list of the signs of autism you think you or your child have and bring it with you
* ask people who know you or your child well (like friends, family or teachers) if they have noticed any possible signs you could put on your list
* bring a pen and paper so you can take notes
* bring your child or someone who knows you well with you, if you think it might help (you do not have to)

**Do Not:**

* try not to talk too much about other things – autism should be the main thing you talk about

## 2. Have an autism assessment

An autism assessment is where a team of autism specialists check if you or your child are autistic.

An assessment team may:

* ask about any problems you or your child are having
* watch how you or your child interact with other people
* speak to people who know you or your child well, such as family, friends, your GP or your child's teachers

At the end of the assessment, you'll be given a report saying if you or your child are autistic.

[Find out what happens during an autism assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/assessments/)

## How a diagnosis can help

### **Parents and children**

For parents and children, a diagnosis can help you:

* understand your child's needs and [how you can help your child](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-day-to-day-life/)
* get [advice about support for your child at school](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/school/)
* get [support for parents and carers of autistic people](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-families/), such as financial benefits
* understand that your child is not just being "naughty" or "difficult"

### **Adults**

For adults, a diagnosis can help you:

* understand why you might find some things harder than other people
* explain to others why you see and feel the world in a different way
* get support at college, university or work
* get some financial benefits

## If you find it hard to get an assessment

It's not always easy to get an autism assessment. Waiting times can also be very long.

If you're finding it hard to get an assessment, you could ask to speak to someone else, like another GP – this is called getting a second opinion.

It may also help to speak to other people who have been in a similar situation.

[Find out about where to get support](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)

## Find out more:

* [National Autistic Society: diagnosis](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis)
* [National Autistic Society: pre-diagnosis – a guide for adults who think they might be autistic](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/pre-diagnosis/adults)
* [Ambitious about Autism: how assessment and diagnosis works in the early years](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/early-years/how-assessments-and-diagnosis-works)

## More in [Getting diagnosed as autistic](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/)

* How to get diagnosed
* [What happens during an autism assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/assessments/)

[How to get an autism assessment - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/>

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# What Happens During an Autism Assessment

## How to get an autism assessment

You need to be referred for an assessment by someone such as a GP or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) staff at your child's school.

You may have to wait a few months to get an appointment.

[Find out how to get diagnosed](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/)

## What you can do while you wait for an assessment

If you think you or your child need support at school, home or at work, you can start getting help before having an assessment.

You can:

* ask a GP if the assessment team can suggest any support groups
* ask a GP to refer your child for speech and language therapy
* find a local support group using the [National Autistic Society services directory](https://www.autism.org.uk/directory)
* talk to teachers or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) staff at your child's school
* speak to student support services at college or university
* speak to your manager or human resources at work
* ask your local council for a [needs assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment/) to see what support they can recommend

## What happens during an autism assessment

You or your child may have 1 or more appointments with a team of different professionals.

### **For children**

The assessment team may:

* ask you about your child's development, such as when they started talking
* watch how you and your child interact, and how your child plays
* read any reports sent by their GP, nursery or school
* ask about their medical history and do a physical examination

A member of the team may also visit your child's school to watch them in class and at break time.

### **For adults**

The assessment team may:

* ask you to fill in a questionnaire about yourself and any problems you have
* speak to someone who knew you as a child to find out about your childhood
* read any reports from the GP about other health problems you may have

## Getting the result

When the assessment is finished, you'll be given a report saying what the team found.

You may be given it by the team or get it in the post.

The report will say:

* if you or your child are autistic – it might say something like you "meet the criteria for autism spectrum diagnosis"
* what you or your child might need help with – such as social interaction, communication, behaviours or sensitivity to lights, colours and sounds
* what you or your child are good at

Sometimes the report can be hard to understand as it can be full of terms used by healthcare professionals.

Ask the assessment team if you need any help.

You and your child should also be offered another appointment a few weeks or months later, to talk to someone from the assessment team about the report.

Autism is a lifelong condition, so the report will be used throughout childhood and into adulthood.

## If you do not agree with the result

When you get the report, you may:

* be told you or your child are not autistic
* be asked to wait until your child is a bit older to be assessed again, as the signs of autism may not be clear
* be given a diagnosis you do not agree with, such as a learning disability

Ask the assessment team why they have made the diagnosis they have.

The assessment team might arrange for a second opinion from a different team.

If you still do not agree, you can ask the GP to refer you to another team for a second opinion. Or you can pay for another assessment by a professional you choose who works outside the NHS (privately).

Remember that a second opinion may say the same thing.

## Find out more:

* [Newly diagnosed: things to help](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/newly-diagnosed/)
* [National Autistic Society: pre-diagnosis support, a guide for parents and children](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/pre-diagnosis/parents-and-carers)
* [National Autistic society: pre-diagnosis support, a guide for adults who think they might be autistic](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/pre-diagnosis/adults)
* [Ambitious about Autism: how assessment and diagnosis work in the early years](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/early-years/how-assessments-and-diagnosis-works)

## More in [Getting diagnosed as autistic](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/)

* [How to get diagnosed](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/)
* What happens during an autism assessment

[What happens during an autism assessment - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/assessments/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/assessments/>

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# Newly Diagnosed with Autism: Things to Help

## Give yourself time

People react to a diagnosis of autism in different ways.

For some, it's a relief to find out why they or their child think, feel and act the way they do. For others, it can be a shock.

Try to give yourself time to come to terms with the diagnosis.

Remember:

* help and support is available
* even if things are hard now, they can get better
* you or your child are still the same person as before
* autism is not an illness or disease with treatments or a "cure"
* autistic people have things they're good at as well as things they need help with

## Find help and support services

You might feel alone when you or your child are first diagnosed.

But there are places you can get support.

You can get help from:

* local support groups
* national charities
* other autistic people or parents on social media and forums
* your school, college or workplace
* your local council
* your GP or the autism assessment team that diagnosed you

[Find out about support you can get if you’re autistic](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)

## Listen to other people's stories

Some people find it helpful to find out about other people's stories of autism.

You could also search online for autism blogs, videos or books.

### **IMPORTANT:** Remember, autism is different for everyone. What happened to other people might not be the same for you or your child.

## Look out for other health problems

Autism is not an illness. But many autistic people also have other conditions.

These are not always checked for during an autism assessment.

See a GP if you have any concerns about your or your child's health. They can help you get any extra care you need.

[Find out about other conditions that affect autistic people](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/other-conditions/)

## Find out more about autism

It might help you and your family to find out more about autism.

There can be quite a lot to take in. You do not have to read everything.

You can get trusted information from:

* the NHS – for information about [what autism is](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/what-is-autism/) and advice on [autism and everyday life](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/)
* [National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/) – for autistic children and adults, parents and carers
* [Ambitious about Autism](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/) – for autistic children and young people, and their families

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[Newly diagnosed with autism: things to help - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/newly-diagnosed/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/newly-diagnosed/>

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# Autism and Everyday Life

Find information and advice about living as an autistic person or caring for an autistic child.

# How to help your autistic child with day-to-day life

## How to help your child communicate

## Do:

* use your child's name so they know you're speaking to them
* keep language simple and clear
* speak slowly and clearly
* use simple gestures, eye contact and pictures or symbols to support what you're saying
* allow extra time for your child to understand what you have said
* ask your autism assessment team if you can get help from a speech and language therapist (SLT)
* try ways to help them communicate, such as [Signalong](http://www.signalong.org.uk/), [Makaton](https://www.makaton.org/) or [PECS](https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/)
* read [tips from the National Autistic Society on communicating with your child](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication)

**Do Not:**

* try not to ask your child lots of questions
* try not to have a conversation in a noisy or crowded place
* try not to say things that could have more than 1 meaning, such as “pull your socks up” or “break a leg”

## Dealing with anxiety

Anxiety affects a lot of autistic children and adults. It can be caused by not being able to make sense of things going on around them, and feeling misunderstood or unaccepted by people who are not autistic.

Try to find out why your child’s feeling anxious.

It might be because of:

* a change in routine – it might help to prepare your child for any change, such as a change of class at school
* difficulty identifying, understanding or managing their feelings
* a noisy or brightly coloured place – it might help to take your child to a calmer place, such as another room

If your child is often anxious, ask your GP about therapy, such as [cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/overview/)), which may help.

Search [The National Autistic Society’s directory for counsellors experienced in helping people with autism](https://www.autism.org.uk/directory) and read more about [managing anxiety from The National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/anxiety).

## Helping with your child’s behaviour

Some autistic children have behaviours such as:

* stimming – a kind of repetitive behaviour (such as flapping their hands or flicking their fingers)
* meltdowns – a complete loss of control caused by being totally overwhelmed

If your child has these behaviours, read our advice about [how to help your child’s behaviour](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-with-behaviour/).

## Eating difficulties

Many children are “fussy eaters”.

Autistic children may:

* only want to eat foods of a certain colour or texture
* not eat enough or eat too much
* eat things which are not food (called pica)
* have problems with coughing or choking while eating
* be constipated, so they feel full even when they have not eaten much food

It may help to keep a food diary, including what, where and when your child eats. This can help you notice any common issues your child has.

Speak to a GP or your autism team about any problems your child’s having with eating.

[The National Autistic Society has more about how to help with eating problems](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/eating/all-audiences)

## Problems sleeping

Many autistic children find it hard to get to sleep or wake up several times during the night.

This may be because of:

* anxiety
* sensitivity to the light from smartphones or tablets
* problems with the sleep hormone melatonin
* issues such as hyperactivity or a health condition that affects sleep

You can help your child by:

* keeping a sleep diary of how your child sleeps to help you notice any common issues
* following the same bedtime routine
* making sure their bedroom is dark and quiet
* letting them wear ear plugs if it helps
* talking to a GP about how to manage health conditions that make sleep difficult, such as a food sensitivity or breathing problem

If these tips do not help, talk to your autism team about creating a sleep plan to help your child’s sleep behaviour.

If your child’s sleep does not get better, a GP might refer you to a paediatrician or child psychiatrist with experience of autism who can prescribe a medicine called melatonin to help your child sleep.

## Staying healthy

It’s important that your child has regular check-ups with the:

* dentist
* optician
* doctors treating any other conditions your child has

Children over 14 who also have a learning disability are entitled to an [annual health check](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks/).

Do not be afraid to let staff know what they can do to make it easier to go for check-ups.

[Find out more ways to stay healthy from the National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/physical-health)

## Friendships and socialising

Some autistic children find it hard to make friends.

There are some things you can do to help:

**Do:**

* get ideas from other parents on [autism forums and local support groups](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)
* ask your child’s school if they can help
* ask your autism team how to help your child communicate and socialise
* search the [National Autism Society directory](https://www.autism.org.uk/directory) for local social groups that are autism-friendly
* read more [advice about making friends from the National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/making-friends/parents-and-carers)

**Do Not:**

* do not put pressure on your child – learning social skills takes time
* do not force your child into social situations if they’re OK being on their own

[How to help your autistic child with day-to-day life – NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-day-to-day-life/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-day-to-day-life/>

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**How to help with your autistic child’s behaviour**

**Common types of behaviour in autistic children**

Some autistic children may behave in ways that put a lot of strain on you and your family.

Some common autistic behaviours are:

* stimming (short for 'self-stimulating behaviour'), a kind of repetitive behaviour
* meltdowns, a complete loss of control over behaviour

You may hear health professionals call some behaviours "challenging".

Some autistic children can also be physically or verbally aggressive. Their behaviour can be harmful to themselves or other people.

But remember, all autistic children are different and not every day will be challenging or stressful.

[Ambitious about Autism has more information about behaviours that challenge](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/behaviour/behaviours-that-challenge)

**Why these behaviours happen**

Many autistic children use a set of behaviours to help them manage their emotions and make sense of their environment. Sometimes they're done for enjoyment.

Some things that can be linked to these behaviours include:

* being over- or under-sensitive to things like bright lights, noises, touch or pain
* anxiety, especially when routines suddenly change
* not being able to make sense of what's going on around them
* being unwell or in pain

These behaviours are not your or your child's fault.

**Stimming**

Stimming is a kind of repetitive behaviour.

Common stimming behaviours include:

* rocking, jumping, spinning, head-banging
* hand-flapping, finger-flicking, flicking rubber bands
* repeating words, phrases or sounds
* staring at lights or spinning objects

Stimming is usually harmless. It may look odd to others, but you should not try to stop it if it's not causing any harm to you or your child.

[Ambitious about Autism has more on repetitive behaviours and stimming](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/behaviour/repetitive-behaviours-and-stimming)

**Meltdowns**

Meltdowns are a complete loss of control caused by being totally overwhelmed.

If your child has a meltdown, the most important thing is to try to stay calm and keep them safe.

If you're worried your child might hurt themselves or others, try to hold them to keep them safe.

It's not always possible to prevent meltdowns, but there are some things you can do that may help at an early stage.

These include:

* letting your child wear headphones to listen to calming music
* turning down or removing bright lights
* distraction techniques, such as fiddle toys
* planning ahead for any change in routine, such as a different route to school

It may help to keep a diary for a few weeks to see if you can spot any meltdown triggers that you can do something about.

[The National Autistic Society has more on meltdowns](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/meltdowns/all-audiences)

**Speak to the autism care team or a GP if your child is: autism care team or a GP if your child is:**

* stimming all the time or having lots of meltdowns
* being bullied at school because of their behaviour
* aggressive, harming themselves or harming other people

If you're struggling to cope, your child may be referred for professional support.

**Find out more**

* [Where to get autism support](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)
* [National Autistic Society: coping with sensory differences](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences/sensory-differences)
* [The Challenging Behaviour Foundation: information and guidance](https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information-and-guidance/)

[How to help with your autistic child's behaviour - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-with-behaviour/)

[https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-with-behaviour/](https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-with-behaviour/%20)

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# Advice about school if your child is autistic

## Choosing a school for your child

One of the main decisions you'll have to make is the type of school you want your child to go to.

You'll have to decide if you think your child should go to a:

* mainstream school – a regular school where your child may get support from a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) if they need it
* special school – a school for children with special educational needs
* residential school – where children stay overnight
* independent school – also called a section 41 school, which is not funded by the local council, so you might have to pay fees yourself

This can be a hard decision to make and there might not be lots of choice where you live.

Read more advice from:

* [National Autistic Society: deciding between a mainstream or special school](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/education-choices/england/choosing-between-a-mainstream-and-a-specialist-sch)
* [National Autistic Society: choosing a school in England](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/education-choices/england/choosing-a-school)

## Getting support at a mainstream school

If your child can go to a mainstream school or nursery, you can help them get support if you think they need it.

### **1. Speak to staff at the nursery or school**

Speaking to staff at their nursery or school is the best place to start.

You could speak to:

* your child's teacher
* the school's SENCO

Talk to them about your child's needs. For example, if they need help with communication, learning or social skills.

### **2. Ask what support your child can get**

Ask the teacher or SENCO what support they can provide.

This may be things like:

* extra teaching support for your child
* different ways of teaching that are better for your child
* separate lessons to help your child improve their skills

This may be enough for some autistic children. Other children may need extra support.

### **3. Get extra support if your child needs it**

If your child needs extra support, they'll need an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

This is a document from your local council. It says what education and health needs your child has and what support they should get.

An EHC plan can either help:

* the school apply for extra money so they can support your child
* you apply for a place at a school that's better for your child

Your child does not need to have been diagnosed with autism to get extra support.

Find out more about EHC plans:

* [Ambitious about Autism: education, health and care plans](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/in-education/education-health-and-care-plans)
* [National Autistic Society: education, health and care plans in England](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/extra-help-at-school/england/ehc-plans)

### **How to get extra support**

1. Ask your local council for an EHC assessment of your child's special education needs and disabilities (SEND). An EHC assessment can also be requested by your child's school, a health visitor, doctor, or relative.
2. Have an assessment. The council will speak to you, the school and health professionals to work out what support your child needs.
3. Read the draft plan. You can comment on the plan and add details, like the type of school you want your child to go to.
4. Agree on the final plan.

The whole process can take a few months. Ask the school what support they can offer while it's happening.

[**Find your local council on GOV.UK**](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)

#### **If you do not agree with the council's decision**

The council may decide your child does not need an EHC assessment or plan. If this happens, it should tell you why.

If you do not agree with its decision, you have the right to appeal.

You'll be told how to do this when you hear from the council.

## Getting a place at a special school

To get a place at a special school, your child will usually need an EHC plan.

As part of an EHC plan, you have the right to tell your local council what type of school you'd like your child to go to or name a particular school you prefer.

The council can only refuse this if there's a clear reason why the school is unsuitable.

Find out more about [choosing a school with an EHC plan on the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) website](https://www.ipsea.org.uk/choosing-a-schoolcollege-with-an-ehc-plan).

## Where to get help and advice

Getting support for your child can be a long and complicated process.

You can get advice about it from:

* [Council for Disabled Children: find your local information, advice and support (IAS) service](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/networks/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service)
* [National Autistic Society: education rights helpline](https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/help-and-support/education-advice-line)

It may also help to speak to other parents of autistic children.

[Find out where you can get autism support](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)

## Dealing with anxiety about school

Going to school can be an anxious time for any child. Some autistic children might find it very hard.

You can get advice about it from:

* [National Autistic Society: starting or switching school](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transitions/england/starting-or-switching-school)
* [National Autistic Society: difficulties at lunch and break times](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/difficulties-break-times)
* [National Autistic Society: homework](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/homework)
* [National Autistic Society: exams](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/exams)
* [National Autistic Society: dealing with bullying](http://autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/bullying/bullying)
* [National Autistic Society: exclusion from school in England](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/exclusions/exclusion-england)

[Advice about school if your child is autistic - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/school/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life-school/>

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# Help for families of autistic people

## How autism can affect you and your family

Having an autistic child can put a lot of strain on you and your family.

You might need to spend a lot of time helping your child get the support they need. This can be very stressful and exhausting.

It may be hard to make time for the rest of your family and can affect your relationships with each other.

If you feel you need help, you can get support from lots of places.

## Things that can help you and your family

## Do:

* ask friends and family if they can help with day-to-day things or just be there to talk to
* get advice from other parents of autistic children or autistic adults – [find out where to get support](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)
* listen to other parents' stories – you can search online for blogs, videos and books
* ask your local council for a [carer's assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carer-assessments/) – you might be able to get extra support and financial benefits
* think about doing a course for parents of autistic children – such as the [EarlyBird course from the National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/professional-development/training-and-conferences/earlybird/earlybird)

**Do Not:**

* do not feel guilty for taking time for yourself when you can – even just going for a walk on your own can help give you a break

## Talking to your child about autism

It's your choice when you want to tell your child about their autism.

Some parents do it straight away, while others wait until their child's a bit older. There's no right or wrong time.

When you tell your child, it may help to:

* do it when they're feeling calm or relaxed
* talk to them in a place where they feel comfortable, with no distractions
* explain they do not have an illness, but they might need extra support to help them with some things
* explain they might find some things harder than other people, and some things easier
* bring them to a support group to meet other autistic children

[The National Autistic Society has a guide for parents and carers with advice on how to tell your child about their diagnosis](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/Topics/diagnosis/disclosing-your-autism/parents-and-carers)

## Supporting your other children

Some children can find it hard if their brother or sister is autistic. If you have other children, there are things you can do to help them.

**Do:**

* make time for them whenever you can – try to do some activities with just them
* talk to them about what's going on and ask if they have any questions or worries
* let them have time on their own or with their friends – for example, sleepovers at friends' houses
* check the advice from [Sibs](https://www.sibs.org.uk/), a charity for siblings of disabled children

**Do Not:**

* do not be afraid to involve them in things like meetings with health professionals – it can help them understand what's going on

## Find out more

* [National Autistic Society: family relationships](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/family-life)
* [National Autistic Society: support available for carers in England](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/social-care/social-care-england-carers/support-available-for-carers)
* [Ambitious about Autism: parent toolkit](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/early-years/parent-toolkit)

[Help for families of autistic people - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-families/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-families/>

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# Changing from child to adult care if your child is autistic

## What happens when your child turns 18

Where possible, your child will be asked to be more involved in the decisions about their care.

When your child turns 18:

* the NHS will continue to care for their health, but they may see a different doctor or a care team for adults
* they may have to pay for some of the care they used to get for free from the council
* any support they need to help with their education will need to be provided by their college or university, if they go to one

If your child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP), this will usually continue until they're 25, unless they:

* do not need support anymore
* go to university
* get a job

## What you can do to help your child

It's a good idea to start thinking about your child's future when they're around 14.

You could:

* speak to any doctors or care teams your child has about what happens when they turn 18
* [apply for a needs assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment/) from your council – this may help your child get some free care and support when they're an adult
* [apply for a carer's assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carer-assessments/) if you care for your child – you may be able to get support and financial benefits
* ask colleges or universities what support they can give your child, if they're planning to go to one

### **If you find it hard to get support from your council**

If your council decides your child does not need the same support when they turn 18, you can complain if you disagree.

Check [your local council's website](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) for information about making a complaint.

You might also want to use an [advocate](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/someone-to-speak-up-for-you-advocate/) (someone who helps speak up for you).

An advocate can:

* help you understand the care process and challenge decisions you disagree with
* go to meetings and write letters with you

## Find out more

* [National Autistic Society: transition support](https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/help-and-support/transition-support-service)
* [National Autistic Society: social care for adults in England](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/social-care/social-care-england)

[Changing from child to adult care if your child is autistic - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/changing-from-child-to-adult-care/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/changing-from-child-to-adult-care/>

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# Advice about medicines and medical appointments if you’re autistic

## Useful tips for medicines

If you or your child take medicines, these tips may help.

**Do:**

* ask if there are other treatments that might help – medicine might not always be the only option
* ask about the possible side effects
* tell your doctor if you think the medicine is not working or is causing side effects – some medicines can work differently in autistic people
* ask for regular medicine reviews – a review is a check-up to see if the medicine you're taking is still right for you or your child and is not causing any problems
* read advice about [problems swallowing pills](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/problems-swallowing-pills/) if this is a problem for you or your child

**Do Not:**

* do not stop taking any medicines without speaking to a doctor first – some medicines can cause serious side effects if you stop taking them suddenly

## Useful tips for medical appointments

## Do:

* ask for an appointment at the start or end of the day – the waiting room may be less busy and you may have to wait for less time
* ask for a double appointment so you're not rushed
* arrange a visit before your appointment – knowing what to expect when you go for your appointment may help you or your child feel less anxious
* bring someone else with you on the day if it might help
* ask at reception if there's a quiet place you can wait – if not, ask if you can wait outside or in the car and if someone can call or get you when they're ready

**Do Not:**

* do not worry about letting staff know how they can make things easier – you have the right to ask for simple changes to be made that may help

[Advice about taking medicines and medical appointments if you're autistic - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/advice-about-medicines-and-medical-appointments/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/advice-about-medicines-and-medical-appointments/>

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# Treatments that are not recommended for autism

**Autism is where your brain develops differently to non-autistic people. It is not an illness and there is no cure.**

If you're autistic, a GP or local autism team may suggest approaches that can help you to:

* develop daily living skills
* develop communication skills
* manage other physical or mental health conditions, such as pain or anxiety
* manage harmful behaviours

But there are also treatments and approaches that are not recommended because either:

* they're fake
* there's evidence that they're harmful
* the research and evidence show no benefit to autistic people – or there's no good research into them

## Treatments for autism that are fake or can be harmful

Some products or services, claiming to be cures or treatments for autism, are fake or can be harmful.

Examples of these include:

* GcMAF – an unlicensed injection made from blood cells
* bleaching – also called chlorine dioxide (CD) or Mineral Miracle Solution (MMS)
* CEASE, which discourages vaccinations and recommends potentially dangerous levels of nutritional supplements
* chelation – removing heavy metal toxins from the blood
* secretin – a hormone found in the body
* some vitamins, minerals and dietary supplements
* raw camel's milk

Do not use any of these to treat autism.

### **How to spot fake treatments**

There are some warning signs that may suggest a treatment is fake:

* it claims to "cure" or help people "recover from" autism
* it claims to cure lots of different conditions
* it claims to work in most people and have quick results
* personal stories are used to claim it works, rather than medical evidence
* words like "miracle", "faith" and "trust" are used
* it can be done by anyone without any training or qualifications
* it costs a lot of money
* it is not available on the NHS

### **How to report fake treatments**

You can help stop people selling dangerous treatments by reporting anything you think might be fake.

For a product bought in England or Wales, call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 or [contact the Citizens Advice consumer service using an online form](https://ssl.datamotion.com/form.aspx?co=3438&frm=general&to=flare.fromforms).

For a medicine you think might be fake, visit the [FakeMeds campaign on the GOV.UK website](https://fakemeds.campaign.gov.uk/).

For an advert for a fake treatment in the media, on a website or on social media, [make a complaint using the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) website](https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html).

## Other treatments that are not recommended

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will only recommend something if there is good evidence that it benefits autistic people.

Research into the following approaches has not shown any benefit for autistic people and they are not recommended:

* hyperbaric oxygen therapy – treatment with oxygen in a pressurised chamber
* neurofeedback for speech and language problems – trying to change brain activity
* auditory integration training for speech and language problems – therapy using music
* omega-3 fatty acids – for sleep problems
* exclusion diets – such as gluten-free or casein-free diets and ketogenic diets
* oxytocin – a hormone

If you're considering a treatment that is not recommended by NICE, speak to a GP or local autism team to discuss the risks.

## Find out more

* [National Autistic Society: so-called cures](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/so-called-cures)

[Treatments that are not recommended for autism - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/treatments-that-are-not-recommended-for-autism/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/treatments-that-are-not-recommended-for-autism/>

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[Autism and everyday life - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism//autism-and-everyday-life/>

## More in [Autism and everyday life](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/)

* [How to help your child with day-to-day life](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-day-to-day-life/)
* [How to help with your child's behaviour](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-with-behaviour/)
* [Advice about school](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/school/)
* [Help for families](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-families/)
* [Changing from child to adult care](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/changing-from-child-to-adult-care/)
* [Advice about medicines and medical appointments](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/advice-about-medicines-and-medical-appointments/)
* [Treatments that are not recommended](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/treatments-that-are-not-recommended-for-autism/)

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**Other Conditions that Affect Autistic People**

**Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**

Symptoms of ADHD include:

* finding it hard to concentrate and getting distracted easily
* acting without thinking
* finding it hard to sit still

People with ADHD may need extra support at school or work. Sometimes they need to take medicine.

[Find out more about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/)

**Dyslexia and dyspraxia**

Some autistic people have:

* problems with reading, writing and spelling ([dyslexia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/))
* clumsy movements and problems with organisation and following instructions ([developmental co-ordination disorder, or dyspraxia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/developmental-coordination-disorder-dyspraxia/))

Extra support at school can often help.

**Problems sleeping (insomnia)**

Symptoms of insomnia include:

* finding it hard to go to sleep
* waking up several times during the night
* waking up early and not being able to go back to sleep

Changing your bedtime routine can often help.

[Find out more about sleep and autism from the National Autistic Society](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/physical-health/sleep)

**Mental health problems**

Many autistic people have problems like:

* feeling very worried a lot of the time ([anxiety](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/overview/))
* feeling unhappy, irritable or hopeless ([depression](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/overview/))
* feeling a need to keep doing certain actions ([obsessive compulsive disorder, or OCD](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/overview/))

These conditions can often be treated with talking therapies or medicines.

**Learning disabilities**

A person with a learning disability may find it hard to:

* understand new or complicated information
* learn new skills
* look after themselves

People with a learning disability often need help with daily life.

[Find out more about learning disabilities](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/)

**Epilepsy**

Symptoms of epilepsy include:

* shaking and collapsing (called a "fit" or seizure)
* staring blankly into space
* strange smells or tastes
* tingling in your arms or legs

Epilepsy can often be treated with medicine.

[Find out more about epilepsy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/epilepsy/)

**Problems with joints and other parts of the body**

Some autistic people may have:

* flexible or painful joints
* skin that stretches or bruises easily
* diarrhoea or constipation that does not go away

These can be caused by conditions like [joint hypermobility syndrome](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/joint-hypermobility-syndrome/) or [Ehlers-Danlos syndromes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ehlers-danlos-syndromes/).

You may need support from a range of health professionals, including a physiotherapist.

**See a GP if:**

**GP if:**

* you're autistic and think you might have another condition
* your child is autistic and you think they might have another condition
* you have another condition and think you might be autistic – if you already see a doctor for your other condition, you could speak to them instead

**Find out more**

* [Advice about medicines and medical appointments](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/advice-about-medicines-and-medical-appointments/)
* [National Autistic Society: related conditions](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/related-conditions/related-conditions)

[Other conditions that affect autistic people - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/other-conditions/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/other-conditions/>

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# Where to Get Autism Support

## Friends and family

Telling people close to you about your or your child's autism diagnosis can help them understand how to support you.

They may be able to help with:

* everyday things so you have more time to focus on yourself or your child
* emotional support

## National charities and support networks

### **National Autistic Society**

For autistic adults and children, and their families.

* Website: [www.autism.org.uk](https://www.autism.org.uk/)

### **Ambitious about Autism**

For autistic children and young people, their parents and carers.

* Call: 020 8815 5444
* E-mail: [info@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:info@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)
* Website: [www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/)

### **Autism Central**

For parents and carers of autistic children, young people and adults.

* Website: [www.autismcentral.org.uk](http://www.autismcentral.org.uk/)

## Local support groups

The assessment team that diagnosed you or your child should give you information on local support groups.

You can also search for local groups:

* [National Autistic Society: autism services directory](https://www.autism.org.uk/directory).
* [Autism Central: find help](https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/find-help)

## Social media and forums

There are many people with experience of autism offering support and sharing their stories on forums and social media.

You do not have to talk to others in online groups, but it can be helpful to look at what they're saying.

A good place to start is the groups run by autism charities. But bear in mind the NHS does not monitor these sites.

### **Important**

Comments on social media and forums are often based on personal experience and should not be taken as advice that would help you or your child.

### **Facebook**

* [National Autistic Society Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/NationalAutisticSociety)
* [Ambitious about Autism Facebook group](https://en-gb.facebook.com/ambitiousaboutautism/)
* [Actually Autistic](https://www.facebook.com/actuallyautistic/) for autistic adults
* [Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE)](https://www.facebook.com/theACEcharity/)

[How to use Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/help/) if you're new to it.

### **Twitter**

* [National Autistic Society Twitter group](https://twitter.com/Autism)
* [Ambitious about Autism Twitter group](https://twitter.com/AmbitiousAutism)
* [Autistica](https://twitter.com/AutisticaUK)

[How to use Twitter](https://help.twitter.com/en) if you're new to it.

### **Forums and communities**

* [National Autistic Society Community](https://community.autism.org.uk/)
* [Autism Support (HealthUnlocked)](https://healthunlocked.com/autism-support)

## Your school, college or workplace

You can get support to make things easier for you or your child.

Find out what help is available at:

* nursery or school – speak to teachers or a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)
* college or university – speak to student support services
* work – speak to your manager and human resources (HR)

## Your local council

You can get some support and financial benefits from your local council.

What's available depends on your situation.

### **For children and young people**

For people under 25, ask your council about their "local offer".

This is the name for the support they provide for young people with special educational needs.

Every council has to have a local offer.

You can also get advice about the local offer from your local special educational needs advice service. [Find your nearest information, advice and support (IAS) service on the Council for Disabled Children website](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/networks/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service)

### **For adults**

If you're an autistic adult or care for an autistic adult, ask your council for a [needs assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment/).

This is an assessment to find out:

* what problems you're having with everyday life
* what support or financial benefits you might be able to get

### **For parents and carers**

If you look after someone who's autistic, ask your council for a [carer's assessment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carer-assessments/).

This is an assessment to find out what support or financial benefits you might be able to get to help you care for an autistic person.

[**Find your local council**](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)

## GPs and autism assessment teams

If you think you or your child needs help from a health professional, speak to a GP or the assessment team that diagnosed you.

They may be able to refer you to a specialist who can help, such as:

* an occupational therapist
* a speech and language therapist
* a mental health specialist



## Help change lives with research

**18 autism studies in the UK** are currently looking for people like you to take part.

[Find studies now](https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/results/search-results?query=autism&location=the%20UK&distance=1000&utm_source=https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/&utm_medium=widget&distance=1000)

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[Where to get autism support - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/support/>

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# Easy Read Information and Videos about Autism

## About autism

* [National Autistic Society: what is autism?](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/what-is-autism)
* [National Autistic Society on YouTube: what is autism? video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=161&v=Lk4qs8jGN4U)

## Medical appointments

* [General Medical Council: going to the doctor (PDF, 1Mb)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/going-to-the-doctor-what-should-happen---easy-read--english-1114_pdf-53919415.pdf)
* [Mencap: telling the doctor you have a learning disability (PDF, 2.2Mb)](https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Doc%202%20learning%20disability%20register.pdf)
* [Seeability: having an eye test](https://www.seeability.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Having%20an%20eye%20test%20-%20April%2022.pdf) [(PDF, 1.3Mb)](https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Doc%202%20learning%20disability%20register.pdf)

### **Annual health checks**

* [Mencap: annual health checks (PDF, 2.7Mb)](https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Doc%203%20annual%20health%20checks.pdf)

### **Going into hospital**

* [UCLH: going to hospital](https://www.uclh.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-pages/going-hospital-easy-read)
* [Mencap: help in hospital – hospital passports](https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health-coronavirus/health-guides)

## Autism and your health

### **Anxiety**

* [Mental Health Foundation: easy read guide to anxiety](https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/easy-read-guide-anxiety)

### **Tummy problems**

* [NHS England: trouble pooing (constipation) (PDF, 764kb)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/constipation-resources-easy-read.pdf)

## Medicines for related conditions

* [EasyHealth: medication leaflets (you will need to create a free account to download the leaflets)](https://www.easyhealth.org.uk/resources/category/114-medication)

## Money and financial benefits

* [Department for Work and Pensions: get help from Personal Independence Payment (PDF, 4.3Mb)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883158/easy-read-get-help-from-personal-independence-payment.pdf)
* [Department for Work and Pensions: how to claim Personal Independence Payment (PDF, 4.9Mb)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/988174/easy-read-how-to-claim-personal-independence-payment.pdf)
* [Financial Conduct Authority: easy read guide on everyday banking (PDF, 886kb)](https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/documents/everyday-banking-easy-read-guide.pdf)
* [Mencap: community care needs assessment (PDF, 492kb)](https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-06/Community%20Care%20factsheet.pdf)
* [Mencap: money you can get to pay for help and support (PDF, 1.3Mb)](https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-06/Money%20you%20can%20get%20to%20pay%20for%20your%20support.pdf)

[Easy read information and videos about autism - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/easy-read-and-videos/)

<https://www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/autism/easy-read-and-videos/>

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**Find out more:**

[Autism - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/)

[What is autism? - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/what-is-autism/)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/what-is-autism/>