

Symptoms

Psychosis

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In general, there are 4 main symptoms associated with a psychotic episode:

- hallucinations
- delusions
- confused and disturbed thoughts
- lack of insight and self-awareness

Hallucinations

Hallucinations are when you experience things that do not exist outside your mind:

- sight – seeing colours, shapes or people
- sounds – hearing voices or other sounds
- touch – feeling touched when there is nobody there
- smell – an odour that other people cannot smell
- taste – a taste when there is nothing in your mouth

Delusions

A delusion is where you believe something that is not true.

You may believe an individual or organisation is planning to hurt or kill you.

If you have grandiose delusions, you may believe you have power or authority. You may think you're the president of a country, or have the power to bring people back from the dead.

Confused and disturbed thoughts

If you have psychosis, you may have disturbed and confused patterns of thought.

Signs of this include:

- rapid and constant speech
- disturbed speech – for example, you may switch from one topic to another mid-sentence
- a sudden loss in your train of thought, resulting in a sudden pause in conversation or activity

Lack of insight

If you have a psychotic episode, you may not be aware that your delusions or hallucinations are not real. This may lead you to feel frightened or distressed.

Postnatal psychosis

Postnatal psychosis (postpartum psychosis) is a severe form of postnatal depression. It usually happens in the first few weeks after having a baby.

It is more likely to affect women who already have a mental health condition. For example, [bipolar disorder](#) or [schizophrenia](#).

Symptoms of postnatal psychosis can also include changes in mood:

- high mood (mania) - for example, feeling elated, talking and thinking too much or too quick
- low mood - for example, feeling sad, a lack of energy, loss of appetite, and trouble sleeping

[Postpartum psychosis](#)

Contact your GP if:

- you think you or someone you know may have developed postnatal psychosis

If you think the person might harm themselves or their baby, call 112 or 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Psychosis is not the same as psychopath

'Psychosis' and 'psychopath' are not the same thing.

Psychosis is a short-term (acute) condition. Treatment often leads to a full recovery.

If you have psychosis, you are more likely to harm yourself than others.

A psychopath is someone with an anti-social personality disorder.

This means they:

- lack empathy - the capacity to understand how someone else feels
- are manipulative
- often do not care about the consequences of their actions

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

Page last reviewed: 1 September 2022

Next review due: 1 September 2025

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