

Asperger's

Definition

Asperger's Syndrome is an Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD. The neurobiological disorder is named for Viennese doctor Hans Asperger who was the first to recognize and study the condition in 1944.

Cause

Scientists and doctors generally agree Asperger's Syndrome (AS) is caused by abnormalities in the brain and that there are many possible reasons those abnormalities occur including:

- **Genetic predisposition:** Studies show AS runs in families.
 - **Environmental:** Some researchers believe toxins, chemical overload, allergies, or yeast overgrowth can lead to irregularities in the brain.
 - **Medical conditions:** Some medical conditions, such as epilepsy, are more common in people with ASDs. Some researchers believe immune system dysfunction can lead to the changes in the brain that cause Autism.
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Diagnosis

Three main symptoms must be present—in most cases before the age of three—for the proper diagnosis of an ASD are:

1. Impairments in social skills
 2. Impairments in communication
 3. Ritualistic or repetitive activities and interests
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Treatment and therapies

- Psychotherapy
- Behavior modification
- Social skills training
- Education interventions
- Diet restrictions and enhancements
- Medication
- Cognitive skills training



Symptoms and characteristics

The disorder can range from mild to severe and so can the symptoms, ranging from extreme in one person to absent in another. The most obvious and common trait is severe trouble with social situations. In general, traits of AS include:

- Repetitive behaviors
 - Need for routines and sameness
 - Poor social skills
 - Problems making eye contact
 - Inability to read nonverbal cues
 - Lack of emotional and social reciprocity
 - Intense interest in one area
 - Inability to make same-age friends
 - Sensitivity to light, sound, taste, smell, and touch
 - Normal IQ, often with great ability in one area
 - Difficulty determining personal space
 - Clumsiness
 - Extensive vocabulary
 - Rigid or monotonous speech patterns
 - Eccentric behavior
 - Lack of emotional spontaneity
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Helpful resources

Asperger's Disorder Homepage
<http://aspergers.com>

O.A.S.I.S. Online Asperger Syndrome Information & Support
<http://www.aspergersyndrome.org>

Autism Research Institute
<http://www.autism.com>

Autism Society of America
<http://www.autism-society.org>

Autism Speaks
<http://www.autismspeaks.org>

