

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a severe, lifelong brain disorder. People who have it may hear voices, see things that aren't there or believe that others are reading or controlling their minds.



In men, symptoms usually start in the late teens and early 20s. They include hallucinations, or seeing things, and delusions such as hearing voices. For women, they start in the mid-20s to early 30s.



Other symptoms include:

- Unusual thoughts or perceptions
- Disorders of movement
- Difficulty speaking and expressing emotion
- Problems with attention, memory and organization

No one is sure what causes schizophrenia, but your genetic makeup and brain chemistry probably play a role.

Medicines can relieve many of the symptoms, but it can take several tries before you find the right drug. You can reduce relapses by staying on your medicine for as long as your doctor recommends.

With treatment, many people improve enough to lead satisfying lives.



Text is public domain by MedlinePlus (www.medlineplus.gov) This handout, created by Healthy Roads Media (www.healthyroadsmedia.org), can be freely distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us>)

Last reviewed 2012