



*Yelm Family  
Medicine  
Patient  
Newsletter*

## National Autism Awareness Month

Committed to your health and our community

### Autism Overview

Autism is one of a group of neurodevelopmental disorders known as pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs). These are characterized by problems with communication and social interaction. Patients often demonstrate restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped behavior patterns or interests.

### Signs and Symptoms

According to the [Autism Society](#), autism symptoms typically become clearly evident during early childhood, between 24 months and 6 years of age. Symptoms include a marked delay in language and cognitive development. There may be signs of obsessive and/or antisocial behavior. Asperger syndrome,

another PDD, may be referred to as “high functioning autism.”

Asperger syndrome usually lacks the primary communication and cognitive problems that characterize classic autism.

Autism symptoms can range from mild to severe. Some people may be considered autistic but manage to function in society without many setbacks. For others, the condition can have a substantial impact on their lives.

### Causes of Autism

The exact cause of autism and other autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) is unknown. The most current science demonstrates that there is no single cause of autism. According to the [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#), it’s likely that both

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### Easter History

Easter commemorates Jesus' resurrection three days after his crucifixion and death. Following his death, he was removed from the cross and hastily buried in a tomb. On Sunday, it was discovered that Jesus' tomb was empty and angels informed onlookers that Jesus had risen. Throughout the next 40 days, Jesus appears to his apostles and disciples before finally ascending to heaven. Easter is the highest and holiest of holidays in the Christian faith. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the [spring equinox](#), usually occurring between March 22 and April 25.

genetics and environment play a role.

## Prevalence of Autism

Autism spectrum disorders are found in individuals around the world, regardless of race, cultural, or economic background.

According to the

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), autism does occur more often in boys than in girls, with a five-to-one male-to-female ratio.

The [CDC](#) estimates that one in 68 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder. There are indications that instances of ASDs are on the rise. Some fault environmental factors. However, experts debate whether there is an actual increase in cases or just more frequent diagnoses.

## Types of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Classic autism usually entails substantial problems in all of the areas affected by ASDs. Someone with Asperger syndrome has issues with behavioral and social interaction. The symptoms experienced by people with Asperger syndrome are usually

less severe than those experienced by patients with classic autism.

There is still some debate as to whether Asperger syndrome is a variation of classic autism. Some argue that it should be classified as a separate disorder.

Pervasive Development Disorder–Not Otherwise Specified (PDD–NOS) is a classification for someone who exhibits signs of autism but does not fit into the categories of classic autism or Asperger.

## Treatments and Outlook

There is no cure for ASDs. The most effective treatments involve early and intensive behavioral interventions. It is generally agreed that the earlier a child is enrolled in these programs, the better their outlook will be.

Since conventional medicine has not found a cure for ASDs, patients and their advocates have sought alternatives, including:

- high dose vitamins
- chelation therapy
- hyperbaric oxygen

There is currently no evidence that these treatments are effective.

Parents should weigh the research

and financial costs before investing in any of these therapies for their children.

