

This is a mental illness characterised by severe irrationality in thought and behaviour.

What to look for

A diagnosis of schizophrenia is considered when a person experiences at least two of the following symptoms:

- delusions.
- hallucinations.
- disorganised speech.
- irrational behaviour, rigidity, or floppiness of limbs.
- negative symptoms, such as inaction, silence, loss of will.

These symptoms are usually accompanied by a substantial decrease in the ability to interact with others. The onset of schizophrenia is usually characterised by the psychotic symptoms listed above or by strange behaviour or the symptoms can be less in severity.

Most report a sense of being different and not connected with others. They are often lonely and anxious and they do not know why they feel this way.

A person with this illness may have their own way of communicating and may not be able to stick with one idea, they may flit from one thought to another rapidly and not make sense to a person who is listening to them. These people can often be suspicious and can hear voices speaking to them.

Causes

There are many theories with regard to the cause of schizophrenia. Most specialists agree that symptoms are provoked by chemical disturbances of brain function. Genetics is another possible cause as well as particular family upbringing.

Traditional Treatment

A combination of medication and psychotherapy is usually required to help the patient resume a normal life and interactions with people.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Because schizophrenia is such a serious and complex disorder, few natural therapies are known to be effective. However, research interest in schizophrenia has grown rapidly in recent years.

Dietary Considerations

There are possibilities that certain supplements are able to help people with this illness. They are B complex, Choline, Zinc, vitamin C, vitamin E, and manganese.

When to seek further professional advice

- you or someone you know experiences the symptoms listed in the description section.