

## Managing Symptoms

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Here is information that can really help when you have schizophrenia. Symptoms you may be having include:

- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Laughing at inappropriate times
- Lack of interest in eating or food refusal
- Anxiety and phobias
- Problems with memory
- Slower thought processing
- Disorganized speech
- Seeing or hearing things that others can't see or hear
- Random anger or aggression

## Taking care of yourself and your symptoms helps keep you out of trouble!

- Taking medication as prescribed
- Having friends, family, or others be involved in your life
- Going to a counselor and/or support group of people with similar problems

## Treating Schizophrenia

There is no way to fix schizophrenia and make it go away forever. Doctors can help with many problems and help you feel better. There are medications that can help. Seeing a counselor and having family and friends involved in your life is helpful. It is very important to get help as soon as you begin noticing problems.

### **Medication is not a cure for schizophrenia.**

Taking medicine your doctor gives you can help with problems, such as, seeing things that are not there, believing in things that are not true, and other upsetting thoughts.

## **Medication will not make your problems go away completely.**

But medication can really help you live with problems related to schizophrenia. Medication doesn't help with all problems. Issues like wanting to be alone, not wanting to do anything, or feeling flat or emotionless may not be helped with medication.

## **Some medication can even start problems.**

Schizophrenia medication can sometimes create other problems. Troubles like wanting to sleep more, not feeling like doing much, weight gain, problems with sex, and unwanted body movements are not uncommon. If you have signs like these, make sure you call your doctor and ask for help! Your doctor can try different medications to help you feel better.

## **Never take less medication or stop taking medication without seeing your doctor first!**

If you stop taking medication it can make symptoms return. Sometimes the symptoms can be so bad you may have to go to the hospital for treatment. Taking medication as prescribed and following up with visits to your doctor can prevent hospital visits. If you're having trouble with your medication or feel you don't need to take it anymore, talk to your doctor.

Remember, taking medication is just one part of feeling better and reducing your symptoms.

## **Building a strong support team**

It helps a great deal if your family and support system know what you might be feeling and how to help you. The more your support system knows, the better able they will be to help you!

Having friends and family to call on can really help! Surrounding yourself with people who care and want you feeling your best can help you feel less alone.

Here are some ways to build up your support team:

- Your friends and family can help you get the right care, troubleshoot problems, and work with you to keep issues manageable. You can tell those who care about you that you may call them at times for help.
- Try not to be alone too much. If you can't work, you may still be able to help others struggling with similar problems. If you'd like to meet more people, think about joining a schizophrenia support group or going to a church close by. Making new friends and doing fun things can be helpful.

- Ask your support system, doctors, or a case worker about resources related to schizophrenia. Having places or centers to go to can be useful to staying healthy.

## Talking To Someone About Schizophrenia Can Be Very Helpful

You can talk to someone on your own or in a group of people like you. This can help you to:

- Learn new social skills
- Stay on medication
- Manage problems
- Make plans and set goals
- Cope with stress
- Problem solve
- Support your weekly goals and activities
- Identify signs of relapse
- Work on relationships
- Gain support and more...

## Helping You Keep From Feeling Bad Again

Sometimes you can start to feel bad and other life issues may make feelings worse. Here are some ways you can help keep symptoms manageable:

**Stay on medication.** Medication is the MOST IMPORTANT part of your care and the key to feeling better. Please do not stop or change your medications without telling your doctor! Keep taking medication even if you don't want to wait until you can see your doctor.

**Talk to your team.** Ask your doctor, case manager, counselor and others who are helping you if you have questions or you are worried about something.

**Be aware of warning signs.** Watch out for general warning signs such as hearing things that others do not hear, seeing or believing things that others do not. If you start sleeping more than usual or your eating patterns change (eating more, less or not much at all), these may be warning signs as well.

**If you schizophrenic signs come back make sure you know what to do.**

Call your doctor and all the support people you need to if:

- Voices are telling you to hurt yourself or others
- You feel the urge to hurt yourself or others
- You are feeling hopeless
- You are seeing things that aren't really there
- You feel you cannot leave the house
- You are not taking care of yourself

Stay in touch with your doctor and counselor. Others may pick up on signs you are having trouble before you do. Stay in touch with your team and loved ones as much as you can.

Stay away from people, places and things that make you feel bad. Being around negative people, places and things can make you feel worse. If you start to worry that things are getting worse in your life, call family, friends and your doctor. These people can help you make changes to stay healthy and safe.

## Sources

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