

DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Schizophrenia

If you have schizophrenia, it's important to understand your symptoms and how they affect your life. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Antipsychotics	Antipsychotic medication is commonly prescribed to people with schizophrenia. Antipsychotics affect chemicals in the brain, such as serotonin and dopamine, and can reduce delusions and hallucinations.
Cognitive symptoms	Cognitive symptoms may include the inability to focus on a task, problems with working memory, and poor executive function (the ability to absorb and interpret information and make decisions based on that information).
Delusion	A delusion is a false belief that isn't based in reality. While there are many types of delusions, many of the delusions in schizophrenia involve paranoia, such as the belief that people are following you.
Disorganized thinking	Individuals with schizophrenia often exhibit disorganized speech and it's thought that they have disorganized thinking as well. With disorganized thinking, communication is impaired. Answers to questions may be completely unrelated to the topic. Occasionally, speech may involve meaningless words that can't be understood or sentences that don't make sense.
Hallucination	A hallucination involves seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, or smelling things that aren't really there. Hearing voices is the most common hallucination in schizophrenia.
Negative symptoms	Negative symptoms refer to the reduced ability to function normally because an individual isn't doing something that most people do. Individuals with schizophrenia may lack emotion, not make eye contact, or neglect hygiene.
Positive symptoms	Refers to the presence of symptoms that interfere with a person's ability to function such as hallucinations, delusions, and racing thoughts.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage schizophrenia

Ab	pout Symptoms	
	I have symptoms that could indicate I have schizophrenia. How can I get evaluated?	
	How long have I likely had schizophrenia?	
	Are there different types of schizophrenia?	
Ab	oout Causes & Risk Factors	
	Is schizophrenia hereditary?	
	What likely caused me to develop schizophrenia?	
	Is it possible I have a health problem or another mental illness contributing to my symptoms?	
	Should any of my family members be checked for schizophrenia?	
Ab	oout Diagnosis	
	How is schizophrenia diagnosed? Is there a test for schizophrenia?	
	How will having a diagnosis of schizophrenia affect my life?	
۸h	pout Treatment	
	Do I need to take medication?	
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	What type of response can I expect from medication?	
	Is schizophrenia curable?	
	What side effects might I expect from the medication?	
	Could talk therapy help me?	
	Do I need any other services to help me manage my symptoms?	
	How long will I require treatment?	
	How often will I need to attend appointments?	
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About Coping and Living With			
	Should I make any changes to my lifestyle to better manage my symptoms?		
	Should I tell my employer I was diagnosed with schizophrenia?		
	Can I drink alcohol?		
	What should I do if I have trouble paying for my medical care?		
	What should I do if I have an emergency situation in between my regularly scheduled appointments?		
	Is it safe for me to provide care for other people, drive, and carry out other activities?		
	Am I able to qualify for disability?		
	What would happen if I chose to stop treatment?		
	What is my long-term prognosis?		