



## What Is Schizophrenia?- Condensed

Although currently classified as a mental illness, schizophrenia is now scientifically accepted as a neurobiological brain illness.

Schizophrenia usually starts in adolescence or early twenties in males and in the late 20s and early 30s in some females. Symptoms vary greatly among different people. Schizophrenia affects about 1% of the world's population, (70 million people, around the world).

Symptoms of schizophrenia may include hallucinations (seeing, hearing or smelling things that are not really there) and delusions (persistent false beliefs, such as that someone plans to harm them or that the affected individual is a person is a prophet, or member of the CIA). Some people experience withdrawal, lack of interest in things they used to love, or a loss of interest in self-care, such as not eating or showering. Cognitive impairment may include memory deficits and inability to plan or make decisions. Patients suffering from schizophrenia often do not realize they are sick and resist being hospitalized or refuse medications that can help them.

Schizophrenia medications available today, which reduce or eliminate symptoms, are called "antipsychotics." Examples include Risperdal, Zyprexa, Seroquel, and Abilify. Some people with schizophrenia experience full recovery (becoming asymptomatic, or nearly asymptomatic) and work, or continue to pursue higher education. A sizeable proportion will have at least partial recovery and may be able to function at some level in the community.

The media sometimes wrongly portrays people with schizophrenia as impossible to relate to, dangerous, or weak. What a patient may experience is very different than what they thought schizophrenia actually is. Common myths of schizophrenia include the erroneous idea that people with schizophrenia have multiple personalities, a split mind, a flawed personality, or a low IQ. Actually, people with schizophrenia who take their medications regularly and do not abuse drugs are NOT dangerous. Statistically, people with schizophrenia are no more dangerous than the general population.

Anyone, including highly intelligent persons, any socioeconomic status, or race can develop schizophrenia. Like cancer, diabetes, autism, and other medical problems, it cannot be simply overcome by willpower.

There is no shame in having schizophrenia, or in taking a medication for it, or for any other medical illness. Schizophrenia is no one's fault, any more than asthma, an infection, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, or cancer. Today, on medication, full recovery from schizophrenia is possible.

***For more information, check out [www.curesz.org](http://www.curesz.org). Thanks for visiting!***