Red Flags of Autism

The following "red flags" may indicate that a child is at risk and should be screened to ensure that he/she is on the right developmental path.

If your baby shows any of these signs, please ask your pediatrician or family practitioner for an immediate evaluation:

- *No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter*
- *No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by nine months or thereafter*
- *No babbling by 12 months*
- *No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months*
- *No words by 16 months*
- *No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months*
- *No response when the child's name is called by 10 months*
- *Any loss of speech, babbling or social skills at any age*

OUR MISSION

World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) will shine a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. WAAD activities will help to increase and develop world knowledge of the autism epidemic and will impart information regarding the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention. Additionally, WAAD will celebrate the unique talents and skills of persons with autism and will be a day when individuals with autism are warmly welcomed and embraced in community events around the globe.

AUTISM SPEAKS™
It's time to listen.

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World Autism Awareness Day

World Autism Awareness Day
April 2

www.worldautismawarenessday.org

FACTS ABOUT AUTISM

Did you know...

- ***Approximately 67 million peope worldwide are affected by autism***
- ***Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the world***
- ***More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with diabetes, cancer and AIDS combined***
- ***Boys are four times more likely than girls to have autism***
- ***There is no medical detection or cure for autism, but early diagnosis and intervention improve outcomes***

What is Autism? *An Overview*

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that typically lasts throughout a persons lifetime. It is part of a group of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

It is estimated that as many as 67 million individuals are affected by autism, making it more common in most countries than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined.

It occurs in all racial, ethnic, and social groups and is four times more likely to strike boys than girls. Autism impairs a persons ability to communicate and relate to others. It is also associated with rigid routines and repetitive behaviors, such as obsessively arranging objects or following very specific routines. Symptoms can range from very mild to quite severe. All of these disorders are characterized by varying degrees of impairment in communication skills and social abilities, and also by repetitive behaviors.

Autism spectrum disorders can usually be reliably diagnosed by age 3, while first diagnosis usually takes place around 18-24 months.

Parents are usually the first to notice unusual behaviors in their child or their child's failure to reach appropriate developmental milestones. Some parents describe a child that seemed different from birth, while others describe a child who was developing normally and then lost skills. Pediatricians may initially dismiss signs of autism, thinking a child will "catch up," and may advise parents to "wait and see." New research shows that when parents suspect something is wrong with their child, they are usually correct. If you have concerns about your childs development, don't wait: speak to your pediatrician about getting your child screened for autism.

Early behavioral intervention can result in significant improvements.

Although parents may have concerns about labeling a toddler as "autistic," the earlier a diagnosis is given, the earlier interventions can begin. Currently, there are no effective means to prevent autism, no single effective treatment, and no known cure.

Research indicates, that early behavioral intervention for at least two years during the preschool years can result in significant improvements in IQ and language ability for many young children with autism spectrum disorders. As soon as autism is diagnosed, behavioral intervention should begin. Effective programs focus on developing communication, social, and cognitive skills.

Awareness & Action

In many countries autism is not a recognized disorder and diagnosis can be difficult. Countries must make a commitment to building capacity for early recognition by raising awareness. Screening methods for detection of at-risk children are available for toddlers as young as 18 months of age. Such screening can occur during a regular well-baby check-up.

The most effective treatments are early, evidence-based behavioral interventions. Many children also benefit from speech-language therapy and occupational therapy.

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