

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia affects 1 in 100 people. It mainly becomes evident in teenagers and people in their twenties. Schizophrenia can last only for a few episodes, but unfortunately tends to be very persistent in many people. Stress from school, relationships or home and drug use are common triggers to schizophrenia. There is also evidence that genetic vulnerability plays a role.

If you think you may be suffering from schizophrenia, or know a young person who is - **seek professional advice early for the best chance of optimising health.**

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms start in a mild form of the illness in adolescence, usually depression.

Common signs and symptoms:

- disorganised speech
- delusions and hallucinations - seeing and hearing things that aren't happening
- paranoia - feelings that others are going to hurt them
- becoming socially withdrawn and
- lost touch with reality.

Getting help

If you are worried about yourself or others and need help some good places to start are:

Kids help line

24 hour free and confidential telephone and online counselling services. They will listen to you and will try to help you with what to do and where to go next for help.

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Online: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

24 hour free and confidential telephone counselling service

Phone: 13 11 14

Friends and family who want advice can also contact the Lifeline information line between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Lifeline can provide information about services in your area and ideas about how to get further help.

Phone: 1300 13 11 14

Online: www.lifeline.org.au

A good friend

Talk to someone you know and trust and get them to help you find out information.

Your doctor (GP)

Make an appointment with your GP to talk about what you are feeling and experiencing. They are trained to help you and know who else you might benefit from speaking with.

Your public hospitals

Most public hospitals have emergency departments that are open 24 hours. You should not hesitate to go to the hospital in case of an emergency.