

Autism: Myths and Facts

Myths	Facts
Everyone with autism is the same.	EVERYONE WITH AUTISM IS DIFFERENT
Autism is an emotional disorder.	Autism is caused by a difference in the way the brain develops. It is NOT an emotional problem. No one knows exactly how the brain is affected but there is a lot of research going on in this area.
Autism is a rare disorder.	Autism occurs in approximately 1 out of every 300 people. It is the third most common developmental disability.
No girls have autism.	Most people with autism are boys. About 1 in 5 are girls.
Only children have autism.	Autism is a lifelong disorder. Children with autism become adults with autism and have a normal life expectancy. This means that there are adults who live and work in your community who have autism. Some may be entirely independent, although most need some degree of support.
People with autism don't like other people.	Some people with autism prefer to be alone. Others want to have friends but aren't sure how to make friends. Most people with autism like other people but it is hard for them to learn how to act around other people.
People with autism don't enjoy affection.	Most parents of people with autism say that their children liked to hug and cuddle when they were little.
People with autism all have special abilities like Rainman.	About 10% of people with autism have a special skill that you wouldn't expect them to have. This might be a gift with numbers, art, or music. 90% of people with autism do not have these abilities.
People with autism can't talk.	Most people with autism learn to talk. Some only talk a little bit and some talk a lot. People who talk a lot may still have trouble with social talk such as having a conversation or chatting.
Having autism is bad.	There are many people with autism who see their autism as a part of who they are. They know that they are different from others but they also know that they have some special strengths that "normal" people don't have, such as the ability to concentrate and study one topic in depth, a good memory, or other strengths that make them very special. They feel that they see the world differently, but that doesn't make their perspective wrong.
People with autism can't be helped.	There are many treatments for autism although there is no cure. Most treatments are educational. They focus on teaching the person with autism the skills to be as independent as they can. People with autism benefit a lot from these interventions and continue to learn and gain skills throughout their lives. There are some medications that help some people with specific symptoms, such as anxiety, but there is no medical treatment for autism.