

ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT FOR TEENS



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Introduction

Asperger's syndrome, found within the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as part of the DSM-5, is a high functioning form of autism found in children, teens, and adults. While Asperger's affects individuals differently, all Asperger's sufferers have difficulty with social interactions. According to Autism Speaks, teenagers and adults with Asperger's will also exhibit restricted range of interests and/or repetitive behavior.

While Asperger's syndrome shares some similarities with other forms of autism, Autism Initiatives explains that people with Asperger's syndrome typically do not experience the same language and cognitive delays or learning disabilities normally associated with autism.

No two individuals with Asperger's syndrome are alike. Every child, teen, or adult with symptoms of Asperger's will experience the disorder differently. Symptoms are often found in children, but can also be identified in teenagers and adults.

Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome in Children

Symptoms of Asperger's in young children will often become first apparent when the child enters school and begins to interact with other children their own age.

According to WebMD, there are a variety of symptoms of Asperger's in children. Some of those symptoms include:

- Unable to pick up on social cues
- Robotic or repetitive speech
- Lack of inborn social skills such as reading body language, start or maintain conversation, or taking turns
- Dislike in any changes in routine
- Appear to lack empathy
- Be unable to recognize subtle difference in speech such as tone, pitch, accent, etc. that alter the meaning of one's speech (lack of understanding of jokes, sarcasm, etc.)
- Have a formal style of speaking that is advanced for their age (saying "beckon" instead of "call", etc.)
- Talk frequently about a favorite subject. One-sided conversations are common. Internal thoughts are often verbalized.
- Avoid eye contact or stares at others
- Have unusual facial expressions or postures
- Be preoccupied with only one or limited number of interests. Children are often very knowledgeable about this interest. Many children with Asperger's syndrome are overly interested in parts of a whole (like drawing highly detailed drawings, studying anatomy, blueprints, etc). They may show unusual interests.
- Delayed motor development

- Heightened sensitivity and become overstimulated by loud noises, lights, tastes or textures.
- Have difficulty playing games that require imagination
- Have poor handwriting
- Have late development in motor skills such as catching a ball or using silverware

While a child may exhibit one or two of these symptoms, they may not have Asperger's syndrome. In order to be diagnosed with Asperger's, a child will have a variety of symptoms and must have significant trouble in social situations.

Although Asperger's is similar to autism, a child with Asperger's will be developed normally in other areas where autistic children will not. A child with Asperger's will have normal language and intellectual development. They will typically make more of an effort than those with autism to engage in activities with their peers and make friends.

Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome in Teenagers

Many of the symptoms of Asperger's from childhood will continue to be expressed throughout the teenage years. Teenagers with Asperger's syndrome may begin to learn some of the social skills they were lacking earlier in life. However, trouble with interpreting and understanding the behavior of others may still remain.

According to WebMD, teens with Asperger's may face teasing and [bullying](#) from their peers. Teens with Asperger's may have a strong desire for friendship, but may feel shy or intimidated by others. A teen with Asperger's may feel different. While the teen's peers will be focusing on and striving to fit in, an Asperger's teen will find this activity draining and frustrating. Teenagers who are diagnosed with Asperger's may appear to be more immature than their peers. They may be naive and over-trusting.

The social pressures and complications associated with Asperger's syndrome can not only frustrate your teen, but can also cause them to become withdrawn and socially isolated. It is not uncommon for teens with Asperger's to also be [depressed](#) or [anxious](#).

Many teens with Asperger's syndrome are able to make and keep a few close friends during their teenage years. Those with Asperger's are often less interested in following social norms or fads, allowing them to think creatively and pursue original goals. Oftentimes teenagers and adults with Asperger's are successful in the classroom and in their professions, as they adhere to the rules and pursue honesty.

Asperger's Syndrome in Adults

Asperger's syndrome is a lifelong diagnosis. However, many individuals with Asperger's grow and develop into successful adults. Adults have a much better understanding of their strengths and

weakness with Asperger's. They also learn social skills, including social cues. In fact, many individuals with Asperger's get married and have a family.

Much like the teenage years, many characteristics of Asperger's may lend to success for adults. Attention to detail and focused interest can increase the chances of collegiate and professional success. Many adults with Asperger's go on to work in technology or engineering fields.

Diagnosing Asperger's Syndrome in Children, Teens & Adults

Asperger's syndrome will often remain undiagnosed until a child is placed into a social setting. At this point, the child or teen will struggle to build relationships with their peers and may shrink back or appear awkward in social situations.

Children and Teens with Asperger's often exhibit exceptional language skills. However, they tend to use their extensive vocabulary inappropriately in basic conversation. Someone with Asperger's may repetitively quote facts about an area of interest, or try to force conversation without seeing things from the other person's perspective.

Asperger's can oftentimes be confused or misdiagnosed as other behavioral issues such as [attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#). In fact, many children with Asperger's are first diagnosed with ADHD until it becomes clear that their behavior doesn't stem from an inability to focus, but an inability to socialize.

Teens and adults suffering from Asperger's may not be able to control their emotions. They may laugh or cry at inappropriate times. They may also not realize that they are speaking loudly. Some individuals with Asperger's have a monotone voice or speak with unusual intonation.

Asperger's is different for every individual. It is not uncommon for Asperger's to include any variety of symptoms in children and teenagers. According to Autism Speaks, it is important to note that while there are challenges presented by Asperger's Syndrome, these challenges are often accompanied by unique gifts. One such gift is the ability to focus intently on a point of interest, leading to immense success.

Treatment for Teens with Asperger's Syndrome

While there is no single best treatment for Asperger's, many young adults find [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#) to be effective. This therapy allows the individual to learn social skills. It also helps them to learn how to better control their emotions, obsessions, and repetitive behavior.

Shepherds Hill Academy has worked with many teenagers with symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome. Shepherds Hill Academy is a Residential Therapeutic Boarding School for teens. Our twelve-month

program works to reach individualized goals of our students: whether emotional, behavioral, or a combination.

At Shepherds Hill Academy, your teen will participate in a variety of [proven therapeutic methods](#). Individual therapy includes your teen working specifically with a certified therapist to reach individual goals and successes. Group therapy is another activity where your teen will learn healthy social interaction in a controlled environment. Finally, equine therapy will allow your teen to further develop individually, learning more about their personality, strengths, and weaknesses.

Does your teen exhibit signs and symptoms of Asperger's? Give us a call today to see if we can help your child! Shepherds Hill Academy offers hope and healing to families across the United States, allowing your child to grow and develop to be a successful and productive adult. Inquire online today.

Article Resources:

- Autism Speaks, December 9, 2013, Autism Syndrome, Retrieved from: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/asperger-syndrome>
- Autism Initiative, Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome, Retrieved from: <http://www.autisminitiatives.org/about-autism/what-is-asperger-syndrome/symptoms-of-a-sperger-syndrome.aspx>
- WebMD, Asperger's Syndrome- Symptoms, Retrieved from: <http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/tc/Asperger's-syndrome-symptoms#1>