

FAQ's: Asperger's Syndrome

Q. What is Asperger's Syndrome?

- A. Asperger's Syndrome is a neurobiological disorder included among autism spectrum disorders named for a Viennese physician, Hans Asperger. Asperger published a paper in 1944 which described a pattern of behaviors in several young boys who had normal intelligence and language development, but who also exhibited autistic-like behaviors and marked deficiencies in social and communication skills.

Asperger's Syndrome was added to the DSM IV in 1994, and is increasingly recognized by professionals and parents.¹ Because the disorder was virtually unknown until recent years, many older individuals either received an incorrect diagnosis or remain(ed) undiagnosed.¹

Due to the nature of the disorder, Asperger's is often diagnosed later in childhood as compared to autism or PDD-NOS, with many children not receiving either diagnosis or intervention until school age, or later.

Q. What are the symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome?

- A. Individuals with AS can exhibit a variety of characteristics and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Characteristics associated with Asperger Syndrome (AS) include but are not limited to:
- Difficulty making eye contact with individuals.
 - Marked deficiencies in social skills.
 - Difficulty reading nonverbal cues (body language) and very often the individual with AS has difficulty determining proper body space.
 - Difficulties with transitions or changes and prefer sameness.
 - Obsessive routines and may be preoccupied with a particular subject of interest.
 - Over and or under sensitive to various sensory stimuli.
 - Fine & gross motor skills may be affected.
 - Students with AS are often capable of doing exceptionally well in school when their challenges are not ignored.

Q. What is the treatment for Asperger syndrome?

- A. There is no cure for Asperger syndrome, but people with Asperger syndrome can live full and happy lives, especially with early intervention. Individuals with Asperger's syndrome may benefit from behavioral therapy, speech therapy, and medication for related conditions.²

¹ OASIS, *Asperser Syndrome: What is Asperger Syndrome?*, retrieved on January 28th, 2008 from <http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/aswhatisit.html>

² NICHD, *Asperser Syndrome*, retrieved on January 28th, 2008 from http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/asperger_syndrome.cfm