

MYTHS ABOUT AUTISM

1. Autism is contagious

Nope! You can't catch autism. Autism is something some people are born with, like blue eyes or red hair or a brain that is very good at some things and has more trouble with others.

2. Autism is caused by vaccines

Vaccines do not cause autism. Please make sure your kids get their shots.

3. Autism is a disease

Nope! Autism is a developmental disability some people are born with, like dyslexia or Down Syndrome. It is not a disease. It is a difference, and a disability.

4. Autism is a tragedy

Nope! With the right support, autistic people can go to school, communicate, work, live in the community, have friends, get married, start families, vote, pursue their interests, and anything else they might want to do.

5. Autistic people are eternal children

Nope! Autistic people grow up. An autistic 20 year old is not a toddler in a 20 year old's body-- they are an autistic 20 year old.

6. You can grow out of autism

Nope! Autism is a life-long developmental disability. Autistic children grow up into autistic adults. The same percentage of adults and children are autistic.

7. Autism means not being able to speak

Communication disability is a part of diagnostic criteria for autism, but most autistic people do develop the ability to talk. About 15-20% of autistic people do not develop oral speech. They can use Augmentative & Alternative Communication to speak for themselves.

8. Autism means intellectual disability

About 15-25% of autistic people also have an intellectual disability. Most autistic people are not intellectually disabled. Intellectual disability is not a part of autism, but some people have both.

9. Autistic people lack empathy

Nope! Autistic people feel empathy for other people. Autistic people are people, not robots.

10. All autistic people are savants

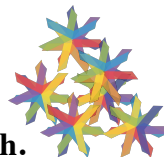
About 10% of autistic people have savant skills like perfect pitch, photographic memory, or calendar calculation. Most autistic people are not savants.

11. Autistic people suffer from autism

Autistic people suffer from prejudice and discrimination. Autistic people suffer when they do not get the support and accommodation they need, when they receive substandard or segregated education or living environments, when they are kept out of the community or kept unemployed, when their civil and human rights are violated, or when their access to communication and the right to make decisions about their lives, bodies, and futures are denied. Autistic people do not suffer from autism.

12. Only boys are autistic.

An autistic woman wrote this factsheet.



April is Autism Acceptance Month.

Acceptance is an action.