After an Autism Diagnosis

A friendly guide for autistic people and their families

A clinical diagnosis of autism can bring many feelings and questions. This guide offers ideas for Autistic people and their families to discuss with healthcare providers and explore support. You can use the steps that feel helpful and go at your own pace. Services and referral processes vary by location, and support can begin while you are waiting for additional assessments or appointments.

1. Review the assessment and diagnosis

Talk with the professional who made the diagnosis. Ask them to explain the findings, answer your questions, and share a copy of the report. The assessment may include information about the person's development, communication, health, strengths, interests, and support needs.





2. Share what you notice in everyday life

Your observations can help the healthcare team understand what matters to the person. You may want to note changes or questions about communication, routines, sleep, eating, sensory experiences, transitions, health, or daily activities. Bring relevant reports or previous assessments to appointments.

3. Discuss health and other assessment needs

Talk with the healthcare provider about any physical, emotional, developmental, or social concerns. Depending on the person's needs, they may suggest additional assessments, such as hearing, vision, or speech and language evaluations, or referral to another provider. If there is a sudden loss of skills or an urgent health concern, contact a healthcare provider promptly.





4. Explore support while referrals are underway

Support does not have to wait until every assessment is complete. Ask about options that may help with communication, development, daily life, learning, school, work, health, or community participation. Depending on where you live, some services may allow families or individuals to contact them directly.

5. Talk with your doctor about genetic testing

Several medical societies recommend genetic testing after a clinical diagnosis of autism, whether or not other conditions are present. Testing is a personal choice: Autistic adults decide for themselves, and families can discuss testing for a child with their doctor. Clinicians do not need to specialize in genetics to start these discussions. This booklet can help you begin the conversation.





6. Make space for family and personal wellbeing

Ask who will coordinate care, which referrals have been made, and when to check in again. The people involved may include healthcare providers, therapists, educators, workplace supports, or community services, depending on the person's needs and preferences. Families and Autistic people can also ask what support is available for their own wellbeing.