

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD): Care Instructions



Overview

Acute stress disorder (ASD) is a short-term mental health condition that can happen after a traumatic event. This could be an event that threatens you or someone else. Or it could be an event that causes serious injury. Military combat, a car crash, and sexual assault are some examples.

You can get ASD if the event happened to you or to someone you love. And you can get it if you saw the event happen to someone else. People who are exposed to a lot of traumatic events can also get ASD. For instance, it can happen to police officers and health care workers.

When you have ASD, you may feel like you're going through the event again. This is called a flashback. And you may have disturbing memories or dreams about the event. You may also have trouble going to work, keeping appointments, and being social.

ASD is treated with counseling. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a common type of counseling for this condition. Sometimes medicines are used to treat ASD.

Symptoms of ASD last less than 1 month. If your symptoms last longer than a month, then you may have another condition called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Be sure to go to your counseling sessions and any follow-up appointments.
- Follow healthy habits. For example, get plenty of rest and exercise every day. And eat a variety of foods.
- Avoid drinking and using drugs.

- Find ways to relax. For example, you could try deep breathing exercises or yoga. Or try getting acupuncture or a massage.
- Connect with others. Seek out friends and family for support.
- If your doctor prescribed medicine, take it as directed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Keep track of your symptoms. Let your doctor know if they don't go away after 1 month.

When should you call for help?



Call **911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.

Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to **988lifeline.org** for more information or to chat online.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your symptoms are getting worse.
- You have new or worse symptoms of anxiety or depression.
- You are not getting better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **S126** in the search box to learn more about "**Acute Stress Disorder (ASD): Care Instructions**".

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