

Psychosis: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

A person with psychosis cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is not real. It can cause strange thoughts and behaviors. A person with psychosis may have:

- Delusions. These are beliefs that are not real.
- Hallucinations. These are things that the person sees or hears that are not really there.
- Personality changes.

Psychosis can be treated with medicines and counseling. It is important to take your medicines exactly as prescribed, even when you feel well. You will need ongoing follow-up care and may need lifelong treatment.

When psychosis is not treated, the risks are higher for suicide, a hospital stay, and other problems. Early treatment called coordinated specialty care (CSC) may help a person who is having his or her first episode of psychotic thoughts. Ask your doctor about CSC.

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 safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- Go to your counseling sessions and follow-up appointments.
- Join a self-help or support group. These groups can be very helpful for some people with psychosis.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Walking is a good choice. You also may want to do other activities, such as running, swimming, cycling, or playing tennis or team sports.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet. It includes whole grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and protein. Eat a variety of foods from each of those groups. This will get you all the nutrients you need.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.

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.

For the caregiver

If you are caring for someone with psychosis, it is important that you take care of yourself as well.

- Learn about psychosis. Know the first signs that symptoms are getting worse.
- Make a plan with all family members about how to take care of your loved one when symptoms are bad.
- Talk about your fears and concerns and those of other family members.
- Seek counseling if you need to.
- Know your legal rights and the legal rights of your family member or loved one.
- Take care of yourself. Stay involved with your own interests, such as your career, hobbies, and friends. Try things like exercise, positive self-talk, relaxation, and deep breathing to help manage your stress.
- Give yourself time to grieve. You may need to deal with emotions such as anger, fear, and frustration. After you work through your feelings, you will be better able to care for yourself and your family.

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.
- Someone who has psychosis displays dangerous behavior, and you think the person might hurt themselves or someone else.

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Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- A person with psychosis mentions suicide. If a suicide threat seems real, with a specific plan and a way to carry it out, you should stay with the person, or ask someone you trust to stay with the person, until you get help.
- A person who has psychosis:
 - Starts to give away possessions.
 - Uses illegal drugs or drinks alcohol heavily.
 - Talks or writes about death, including writing suicide notes and talking about guns, knives, or pills.
 - Starts to spend a lot of time alone.

- Acts very aggressively or suddenly appears calm.
- You hear voices or think you see things that are not there.
- You have a sudden change in behavior.
- You have difficulty taking care of yourself or become confused doing simple chores or tasks.

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

- Your symptoms repeatedly upset your daily activities.
- You have symptoms of psychosis that are new or different from those you had before.

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