

Understanding Autism: What You Should Know

As a new parent, you've counted fingers and toes, diligently read parenting magazines and books, and gotten excited over the smallest coo. Autism is one of the last things you want to think about as your baby ages.

Early diagnosis and treatment, however, offers children with autism a significantly improved outcome for the future.

Research varies on the prevalence of autism in America. Some independent research has found one in 1,000 children has autism, with boys being three to four times more likely to be affected than girls.

Symptoms typically appear before age three and include delays or problems in achieving a variety of developmental milestones. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), common symptoms of autism include:

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Identifying and Treating Traumatic Brain Injury

As the conflicts in the Middle East continue, the number of returning servicemen and women suffering with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) is on the rise.

While the physical injuries sustained as a result of trauma are usually readily apparent, a brain injury may not always be immediately identifiable. Brain injury does not always result in long-term impairment or permanent disability. The location of the injury and its severity each play a significant role in the affected person's outcome.

Symptoms that occur weeks, months and occasionally years after a concussion are often referred to as postconcussive syndrome, or PCS. These symptoms are usually the result of a forceful motion of the head or impact that causes a brief change in the injured person's mental status, creating confusion, disorientation or memory loss.

According to www.traumaticbraininjury.com, brain injuries are usually classified as mild or severe.

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Improved Benefits for Autistic Children

TRICARE is pleased to announce the Enhanced Access to Autism Services Demonstration project, which went into effect on March 15, 2008. It expands coverage for active duty family members (ADFM) diagnosed with autism by providing TRICARE reimbursement for Educational Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIA) services, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), delivered by paraprofessional providers or qualified tutors. Under the program, autistic children are eligible for a greater range of existing evidence-based services.

To be eligible for the demonstration project, military dependents must be at least 18 months old, enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), registered for TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) coverage, and live in the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. Please note that TRICARE is required by statute to recoup claims associated with demonstration project benefits should the patient be deemed ineligible to participate.

"Anything we can do to enhance the quality of life for our service families is a benefit to the nation and our obligation to the men and women who serve," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director, TRICARE Management Activity.

For more information on the demonstration project, visit www.tricare.mil.



An Important Note about TRICARE Program Information: At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law is amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this product.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

Achieve Solutions: Assistance for Everyday Problems

The challenge of dealing with problems ebbs and flows from day to day throughout a lifetime. During trying times, it helps to have a place to turn. Aside from consulting with a medical professional, you may be able to find the answers and information you need by reading.

One such resource is Achieve Solutions®, a secure online behavioral health Web site offered by ValueOptions, Inc., the administrator of your behavioral health benefit in the TRICARE South region. It's available in both English and Spanish and is filled with educational information on behavioral health topics, work/life issues and the employee assistance program (EAP).

To access the Achieve Solutions site, visit www.humana-military.com and click on "Behavioral Health" under "Health and Wellness." Then click on "Achieve Solutions."

Once there, you can view more than 6,000 articles on 200 different topics. The main navigation categorizes these topics as follows:

- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Care and Education
- Health and Wellness
- Relationships
- Work

Current topics being spotlighted on the site include articles on suicide, grief and coping when a family member has been called to war.

The site also features links to the latest behavioral health news and tools to help you assess your concerns or find community services.

Visit and bookmark the Achieve Solutions Web site today. ■

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- **Impaired social interaction.** As early as infancy, a baby with autism may be unresponsive to people or focus intently on one item to the exclusion of others. A child with autism may appear to develop normally and then withdraw and become indifferent to social engagement.
- **Problems with verbal and nonverbal communication.** Children with autism may fail to respond to their name and often avoid eye contact with others. They also may have difficulty interpreting what others are thinking or feeling because they can't understand social cues, such as tone of voice or facial expressions.
- **Unusual, repetitive or severely limited activities and interests.** Many children with autism engage in repetitive movements, such as rocking and twirling, or in self-abusive behavior, such as biting or head-banging. They also usually have difficulty playing interactively with other children.

If you think your child may be exhibiting these symptoms, visit your doctor. He or she can perform the evaluations needed to make a diagnosis.

For more information on autism, visit the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Web site at www.nih.gov. ■

Identifying and Treating Traumatic Brain Injury

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Mild TBI is the most common form and is often overlooked at the time of the injury. A TBI is considered mild if a person experiences a loss of consciousness and/or confusion and disorientation for less than 30 minutes.

Symptoms associated with mild TBI include:

- Depression
- Memory loss
- Mood disturbances, including irritability
- Poor attention/concentration
- Slowed thought processes

A severe TBI is one with loss of consciousness for more than 30 minutes and memory loss following the injury, or a penetrating skull injury, for longer than 24 hours. Symptoms associated with severe TBI include:

- Confusion
- Deficits in speed of processing information and language processing
- Difficulty with attention, concentration or memory
- Emotional lability

Early recognition, early diagnosis, rehabilitation and treatment are the keys to successful recovery for individuals with traumatic brain injuries. Addressing the behavioral health issues associated with TBI also is an integral part of the total recovery process.

For more information on traumatic brain injury or other behavioral health-related topics, visit the Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. Web site at www.humana-military.com. ■

Health Maintenance 101

A Lesson in Preventive Medicine

When life gets hectic, loved ones often remind you of that old cliché to “stop and smell the roses.” If your loved ones had a medical background, however, they might also offer you another, equally important cliché: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends these tips for staying healthy and preventing disease:

- Don’t smoke or use tobacco.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise regularly.

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Refrain from or reduce alcohol use.
- Get recommended health screenings.

TRICARE beneficiaries are eligible for a range of clinical preventive examinations and periodic health screenings, based on age, health history, family history, and lifestyle (see chart below).^{*} Exams and screenings can identify problems before they become serious, and may even find problems before you have symptoms. So, pay attention to your body, watch for warning signs and see your doctor regularly. ■

Screening	Recommended for Men	Recommended for Women
Blood Cholesterol	Request a screening every 5 years beginning at age 18. Early screening is especially important if you are diabetic, have high blood pressure, have a family history of heart disease or if you smoke.	
Blood Pressure	Have your blood pressure checked a minimum of every 2 years.	
Colorectal Cancer	Average Risk – Beginning at age 50, request a fecal occult blood test every year and a sigmoidoscopy/proctosigmoidoscopy every 3-5 years (or a colonoscopy every 10 years). Familial risk – Beginning at age 50, request a colonoscopy every 3-5 years. Note: Those with Hereditary Non-polyposis Colorectal Cancer Syndrome should request a colonoscopy every 2 years beginning at age 25.	
Prostate Cancer	Available tests are prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and digital rectal examination, both of which should be performed annually for all men over age 50, as well as high-risk men ages 40–49.	N/A
Breast Cancer	N/A	One in eight women has a chance of getting breast cancer, so perform monthly self-checks for early detection. Request a mammogram every year beginning at age 40; age 35 if you have family history.
Cervical Cancer	N/A	Request a Pap smear every 1-3 years, starting at age 18 (or younger if sexually active).
Osteoporosis	N/A	If your doctor suspects you may have osteoporosis or osteopenia, he/she may request a bone density study.
Diabetes	If your doctor notices diabetic signs and symptoms during your routine examination, he or she may recommend diabetes tests.	
Obesity	Ask your doctor to calculate your body mass index (BMI), which estimates body fat by comparing height and weight.	
STDs/STIs	If you are sexually active, request a screening for HIV and other STDs/STIs.	
Depression/Stress	If you’ve had prolonged feelings of sadness or anxiety, don’t hesitate to talk to your doctor.	

Heart Health Quiz

See what you know about these important heart health screenings:

1. What total blood cholesterol level is considered to be healthy for an adult?
 - a. 200 mg/dl and below
 - b. 200–239 mg/dl
 - c. 240 mg/dl and up
2. What blood pressure reading is considered to be optimal?
 - a. 140/90
 - b. Between 130/80 and 139/89
 - c. 120/80 or lower

Answers

1. **A.** A total blood cholesterol reading of 200 mg/dl or lower, accompanied by desirable LDL (129 mg/dl or lower) and HDL (60 mg/dl or higher) levels, is considered to be healthy for an adult.
2. **C.** A reading of 120/80 or lower is optimal. Consistent readings over time that are higher than this may require medication.

^{*} See your TRICARE Beneficiary Handbook or visit www.tricare.mil for a more complete listing of covered clinical preventive services.

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1-800-444-5445
1-877-249-9179 (active duty)
1-877-298-3408 (National Guard and Reserve)
www.humana-military.com

PGBA, LLC (claims)

1-800-403-3950

ValueOptions (behavioral health)

1-800-700-8646

Pharmacy Customer Service

1-866-DoD-TRRX (retail)
1-866-DoD-TMOP (mail order)
www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE

National TRICARE Web Sites

www.tricare.mil www.tricareonline.com

Update DEERS

1-800-538-9552
www.tricare.mil/deers

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Switching from ADFM to ADSM?

What You Need to Know

If you're an active duty family member (ADFM) getting ready to join the military yourself or be activated with the National Guard or Reserve, you will need to update your TRICARE status to active duty service member (ADSM).

Basically, you become your own sponsor when you switch to active duty. So any prior TRICARE eligibility you had under a different sponsor must be terminated to avoid claim processing and billing problems.

Some examples of ADFMs becoming ADSMs include:

- ADFMs activated for more than 30 days as a member of the National Guard or Reserve
- ADFMs enlisting or being commissioned
- ADFMs entering a service academy

Two Easy Steps

There are two steps to updating your TRICARE status from ADFM to ADSM:

1. Your prior sponsor (spouse or parent) must terminate any enrollment you may have under him or her.

2. You must go to a RAPIDS office and place your medical eligibility under your own Social Security number.

You can find the nearest RAPIDS location at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rs/owa/home.

When Active Duty Is Done

If you are a National Guard or Reserve member, you will need to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime under your previous sponsor to resume your status as an ADFM.

National Guard and Reserve members must check their enrollment status at the end of activation any time they are activated for more than 30 days, even for training.

If you have any problems, call Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. at 1-800-444-5445 or the TRICARE Regional Office—South at 1-800-554-2397, immediately for assistance. The sooner you call after discovering a problem, the better. ■