

# Autism: A Very Short Introduction - Very Short Introductions 195

## What is Autism?

Autism is a developmental disorder that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others, and learns. People with autism may have difficulty understanding social cues, expressing their emotions, and developing friendships. They may also have repetitive behaviors or interests, and may be sensitive to light, sound, or touch.



## Autism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions Book 195) by Uta Frith

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means that people with autism can have a wide range of symptoms. Some people with autism may be very high-functioning, while others may have more severe symptoms.

## What Causes Autism?

The exact cause of autism is unknown, but it is thought to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Some studies have shown that autism is more common in children who have a family history of the disorder. Other studies have linked autism to exposure to certain environmental toxins, such as lead or mercury.

## **How is Autism Diagnosed?**

Autism is typically diagnosed by a doctor or psychologist who specializes in developmental disorders. The doctor or psychologist will observe the child's behavior and ask questions about the child's development. They may also order genetic tests or other tests to rule out other possible causes of the child's symptoms.

## **How is Autism Managed?**

There is no cure for autism, but there are a variety of treatments that can help to improve the symptoms of the disorder. These treatments may include:

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- **Speech therapy** to help the child develop language skills.
- **Occupational therapy** to help the child develop motor skills and coordination.
- **Physical therapy** to help the child develop strength and balance.
- **Behavioral therapy** to help the child learn how to interact with others and manage their emotions.

- **Medication** to help the child manage symptoms such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, and anxiety.

## What is the Prognosis for Autism?

The prognosis for autism is variable. Some people with autism may be able to live independently and have successful careers, while others may require lifelong support. Early diagnosis and treatment can help to improve the prognosis for people with autism.

## Additional Resources

\* Autism Speaks \* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development



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