

WHAT ARE ACUTE SCHIZOPHRENIA EPISODES?

When symptoms of schizophrenia worsen and become severe, it's called an acute episode.

Acute symptoms may include:

- Delusions, like paranoid fears
- Hallucinations, like hearing or seeing things
- Withdrawing from people or situations
- Not caring about personal hygiene
- Having disorganized thinking, speaking or behavior
- A lack of motivation, trouble staying focused or doing tasks
- Cognitive difficulty, like racing thoughts or confusion

Acute episodes can be serious medical emergencies, and they may lead to hospitalization. And for some people, acute episodes may get worse over time.

This is one of the reasons prevention of acute episodes is so important.

REACHING FOR MAINTENANCE

The risk of acute episodes can't be eliminated, but one of the goals of treatment in schizophrenia is to reach a Maintenance Phase. And by following a treatment plan that includes medication, psychosocial treatments like cognitive behavioral therapy and support for day-to-day challenges — it may be possible to reach.

If you see symptoms changing or getting worse, contact your doctor or another member of the Treatment Team immediately.



Models are used for illustrative purposes only.



5 WAYS TO WORK TOWARD SCHIZOPHRENIA SYMPTOM MAINTENANCE

Even though the risk of acute episodes can't be eliminated, there are things you can do to help control symptoms, and try to prevent episodes from coming back quickly. Here are some of them:

1. Caregivers can be an important source of support when they're involved in their loved one's treatment.

ACTION: Register to download the HelpSheet: [*Caregivers and the Right to Help with 10 Good Reasons to Involve Caregivers on welivewithsz.com*](#)

2. Being treated with the appropriate medication — along with psychosocial therapy and support — is necessary to help improve and control symptoms.

ACTION: Talk to the Treatment Team, especially the doctor, about how well current medication is helping control symptoms.

3. It's critical to stick with the treatment plan in order to help avoid acute episodes from coming back.

ACTION: Try to pinpoint any reasons for not sticking to the treatment plan. Is it side effects, a belief that there's no need for medication, or another obstacle? Then get specific advice from the doctor and Treatment Team on how to help overcome those obstacles.

4. The Treatment Team needs to have accurate, detailed information about how things are going in order to help their patients.

ACTION: Caregivers can keep a log in a notebook or on a laptop or mobile device to keep track of appointments, changes in symptoms and any side effects of medication.

5. Tap into NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). NAMI offers support programs for both patients and caregivers. Learn more about their many programs.

ACTION: Visit <http://www.nami.org>

