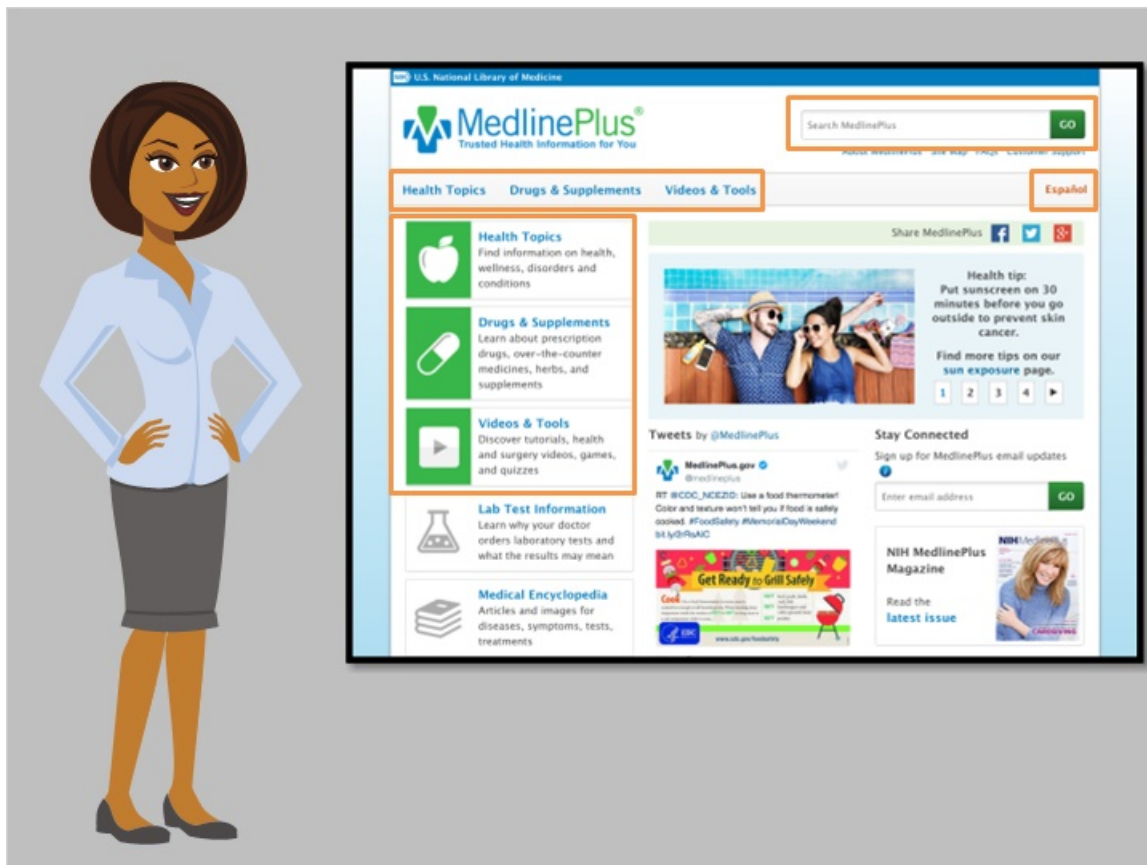


# Navigating Medline Plus



Let's take a closer look at MedlinePlus as Della uses it to search for information about autism.

When Della first goes to the site, she sees a search box at the top of the page. She also notices categories that may help her locate information: **Health Topics**, **Drugs & Supplements**, and **Videos & Tools**. She sees that the site is also available in Spanish, which might be helpful for her nephew's mother.

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**MedlinePlus**  
Trusted Health Information for You

Search MedlinePlus

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**Health Topics** Drugs & Supplements Videos & Tools Español

 **Health Topics**  
Find information on health, wellness, disorders and conditions

 **Drugs & Supplements**  
Learn about prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, herbs, and supplements

 **Videos & Tools**  
Discover tutorials, health and surgery videos, games, and quizzes

 **Lab Test Information**  
Learn why your doctor orders laboratory tests and what the results may mean

 **Medical Encyclopedia**  
Articles and images for diseases, symptoms, tests, treatments

Share MedlinePlus   

**Health tip:**  
Put sunscreen on 30 minutes before you go outside to prevent skin cancer.

Find more tips on our [sun exposure page](#).

1 2 3 4 ▶

**Tweets by @MedlinePlus**

 **MedlinePlus.gov** @medlineplus

RT @CDC\_NCEZID: Use a food thermometer! Color and texture won't tell you if food is safely cooked. #FoodSafety #MemorialDayWeekend bit.ly/2rRsAIC

**Get Ready to Grill Safely**

**Cook** Use a food thermometer to ensure that your food is cooked properly. When cooking, keep your grill open to avoid flare-ups.

**SAFETY** Use a grill, not a charcoal grill, to avoid flare-ups.

**SAFETY** Handwash and rub alcohol hand sanitizer before and after grilling.

 [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)

**Stay Connected**

Sign up for MedlinePlus email updates

**NIH MedlinePlus Magazine**

Read the **latest issue**



As she looks at the rest of the page, she sees many other articles and links. Della begins to feel overwhelmed at the amount of information on the page. Della knows that Autism is a common topic, so she decides to start with the link labeled Health Topics. Can you help Della by opening one of the two **Health Topic** links now?

Della is taken to a page that lists common health topics, sorted by category. She could click one of the category links to be taken to a more detailed list of topics. She isn't sure which category to choose to find autism. Instead, she chooses to use the alphabetical list **Find Topics A to Z** at the top of the page. Della clicks **A** for autism.






Ataxia Telangiectasia  
Atelectasis *see* Collapsed Lung

Atherosclerosis  
Atherosclerosis, Coronary *see* Coronary Artery Disease  
Athlete's Foot  
Atopic Dermatitis *see* Eczema  
Atrial Fibrillation

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Auditory Tumor *see* Acoustic Neuroma  
Autism *see* Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Autoimmune Diseases

Autoinflammatory Disorders *see* Autoimmune Diseases  
Automated External Defibrillators *see* Cardiac Arrest  
Automobile Safety *see* Motor Vehicle Safety  
Autonomic Nervous System Disorders  
Avascular Necrosis *see* Osteonecrosis

Avian Influenza *see* Bird Flu  
AVM *see* Arteriovenous Malformations

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Page last updated on 26 September 2017

Next, she is taken to an alphabetical list of all health topics. She scrolls down the page to the point where she finds **Autism**. She notices that it directs her to see the term **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. This is the official term used by MedlinePlus to refer to autism.

Ataxia Telangiectasia  
Atelectasis *see* Collapsed Lung  
  
Atherosclerosis  
Atherosclerosis, Coronary *see* Coronary Artery Disease  
Athlete's Foot  
Atopic Dermatitis *see* Eczema  
Atrial Fibrillation  
  
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Auditory Tumor *see* Acoustic Neuroma  
Autism *see* Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Autoimmune Diseases  
  
Autoinflammatory Disorders *see* Autoimmune Diseases  
Automated External Defibrillators *see* Cardiac Arrest  
Automobile Safety *see* Motor Vehicle Safety  
Autonomic Nervous System Disorders  
Avascular Necrosis *see* Osteonecrosis  
  
Avian Influenza *see* Bird Flu  
AVM *see* Arteriovenous Malformations

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Page last updated on 26 September 2017

She clicks one of the two links for **Autism Spectrum Disorder** to continue.

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Health Topics Drugs & Supplements Videos & Tools Español


Home → Health Topics → Autism Spectrum Disorder

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Also called: ASD, Pervasive developmental disorder (PDD)

**On this page**

<p><b>Basics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summary</li> <li>▪ Start Here</li> <li>▪ Symptoms</li> <li>▪ Diagnosis and Tests</li> <li>▪ Treatments and Therapies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learn More</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Living With</li> <li>▪ Related Issues</li> <li>▪ Specifics</li> <li>▪ Genetics</li> </ul>	<p><b>See, Play and Learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Check Tools</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statistics and Research</li> <li>▪ Clinical Trials</li> <li>▪ Journal Articles</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find an Expert</li> </ul>	<p><b>For You</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children</li> <li>▪ Teenagers</li> <li>▪ Patient Handouts</li> </ul>



**Summary**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that begins early in childhood and lasts throughout a person's life. It affects how a person acts and interacts with others, communicates, and learns. It includes what used to be known as Asperger syndrome and pervasive developmental disorders.

It is called a "spectrum" disorder because people with ASD can have a range of symptoms. People with ASD might have problems talking with you, or they might not look you in the eye when you talk to them. They may also have restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. They

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**MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA**

Asperger syndrome

Della begins to read the page for **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. At the top, she notices links to the information included on this page, similar to a table of contents. She sees that there is basic information, which includes treatments and therapies. She also notices sections to learn more, and review research. Since Della doesn't know much about autism, she starts with the **Summary** and **Start Here** sections.




of specialists, doing various tests and evaluations to make a diagnosis.

The causes of ASD are not known. Research suggests that both genes and environment play important roles.

There is currently no one standard treatment for ASD. There are many ways to increase your child's ability to grow and learn new skills. Starting them early can lead to better results. Treatments include behavior and communication therapies, skills training, and medicines to control symptoms.

*NIH: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*

### Start Here

- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)  (National Institute of Mental Health)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)  
Also in Spanish
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\)](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
Also in Spanish
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\)](#)  (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)  
Also in Spanish

The **Summary** provides a few paragraphs that are easy to read, and give her a basic understanding.

Under the **Start Here** section, Della sees links to four articles. She can see the name of the organization responsible for each article. She can also identify which links are available in Spanish.

Della knows she can trust all of these resources, since they're included on the MedlinePlus website. She decides to choose the first link in the list, from the National Institute of Mental Health.

The screenshot shows the NIMH website with the following elements:

- Header:** NIH National Institute of Mental Health logo, tagline "Transforming the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses.", and a search bar.
- Navigation Bar:** Home, HEALTH INFORMATION (highlighted), OUTREACH, RESEARCH PRIORITIES, FUNDING, LABS AT NIMH, NEWS & EVENTS, ABOUT US.
- Sub-headers:** Mental Health Information, Statistics, Consumer Health Publications, Help for Mental Illnesses, Clinical Trials.
- Breadcrumbs:** Home > Health Information > Mental Health Information
- Left Sidebar:** Overview, Signs and Symptoms of ASD, Causes and Risk Factors, Diagnosing ASD, Treatments and Therapies, Join a Study, Learn More.
- Main Content:**

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

### Overview

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is said to be a "developmental disorder" because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, a guide created by the American Psychiatric Association used to diagnose mental disorders, people with ASD have:

  - Difficulty with communication and interaction with other people
  - Restricted interests and repetitive behaviors
  - Symptoms that hurt the person's ability to function properly in school, work, and other areas of life

Autism is known as a "spectrum" disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience. ASD occurs in all ethnic, racial, and economic groups. Although ASD can be a lifelong disorder, treatments and services can improve a
- Right Sidebar:**

#### Science News About Autism

  - Noncoding Sections of DNA Associated with Autism Risk
  - Disorders Share Molecular Signatures
  - NIMH's Dr. Ann Wagner Named as National Autism Coordinator

MORE

#### Join A Study

  - Autism Spectrum Disorder Studies for Adults
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder Studies for Children

#### Publication About Autism

  - Autism Spectrum
- Share:** Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Email, Print.

The link opens the article on the website of the National Institute of Mental Health. When Della is done reading the article, she can return to MedlinePlus to continue her search.