

Mental Health

People with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome (22q) sometimes experience **anxiety** as well as **mood or other mental health issues**. There are many effective treatments available.



Did you know...

- About 6 out of every 10 adults with 22q have a treatable psychiatric illness.
- The most common mental health issues in adults with 22q are anxiety and depression.
- Schizophrenia and related disorders are also common. These are often called “psychotic illnesses,” meaning that the person is out of touch with reality.
- Many mental health issues are long-term but are manageable. Early diagnosis and effective treatment are very important.

Tips for young adults

- Find out the facts about common mental health conditions for people with 22q from your doctor.
- If you notice changes in your sleep, energy level, mood or how you are thinking about people, tell your parents, teachers or doctor.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs. Marijuana use (especially in teen years) can increase the risk for developing schizophrenia (a type of mental health disorder) and is bad for your heart.
- Healthy eating and regular physical exercise are helpful to your brain and your heart.

Tips for caregivers

- Watch out for signs and symptoms that represent a change from your young adults’s usual behaviour. These may suggest a treatable psychiatric illness (e.g. changes in emotions, thinking, physical state and/or behaviour/functioning).
- Note when and how things seemed to have changed.
- Find out the facts about psychiatric conditions and management from medical professionals, ideally those who are familiar with 22q. Relatives, friends, the Internet and the media may not be the most reliable sources of medical knowledge.
- Seek medical help early. Accurate diagnosis and early treatment lead to the best outcomes.
- Schedule regular follow-up appointments with your doctors (or health-care providers) to monitor the symptoms and any suggested management and treatments.

Mental health checklist

Do any of these sentences describe you?

- I feel very anxious or find myself worrying a lot.
- I feel sad most days.
- I have a more difficult time concentrating now.
- I don't feel I can trust people like I used to.
- I don't enjoy things anymore.
- I am sleeping much less or much more than before.
- I hear people talking even when no one else is around.
- I don't want to get up in the morning anymore.
- I feel hopeless.
- I am more cranky than I used to be.

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may want to talk to your doctor, a member of your health-care team, or someone you feel comfortable with.

Please contact us if you have any questions

22q Deletion Syndrome Clinic

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This fact sheet was produced in collaboration with the **Good 2 Go Transition Program** at The Hospital for Sick Children. www.sickkids.ca/good2go/

Note: 22q11.2 deletion syndrome ("22q" or "22q11.2DS") has also been known as DiGeorge syndrome, velocardiofacial syndrome, and many other names. For more information, please visit www.22q.org/awareness-events/awareness/same-name-campaign/.