



# SCHIZOPHRENIA

## What is it?

Schizophrenia is a serious **mental illness** that affects how a person thinks, feels and behaves. People with schizophrenia may seem like they have lost touch with reality, which can be distressing for them and for their family and friends

## What are the symptoms?



Problems with attention, memory and organisation



Lack of drive and social withdrawal



Delusions and auditory hallucinations



Disorganised thinking



Behavioural and emotional problems

## What are the causes / triggers?



Genetic factors



Head injury



Abnormal brain development



Psychological causes



Viral infections



Substance abuse, e.g. cannabis or nicotine



Environmental factors such as stressful life events, poverty, discrimination, childhood experiences of abuse or trauma

## How is it treated?

- Schizophrenia is a **chronic disease** and there is no permanent cure.
- **Antipsychotic medication** is usually prescribed to help control symptoms and stabilise the condition and assist patients to cope and function in society.
- **Psychosocial treatment:** Cognitive behavioural therapy is crucial to support patients and manage difficulty with communication, motivation, self-care, work skills and maintaining relationships with others. **Support groups** can also play a positive role. The course of the disease is largely dependent on the degree of support and care patients receive.

Having a family member who suffers from schizophrenia, places a lot of stress on the family – **family therapy** provides crucial support.



Real value speaks for itself

KeyHealth  
MEDICAL SCHEME