

What we know (and don't) about the causes of autism

What causes autism?

As researchers have worked to unravel t[autism's] nature, they've come to grips with some unsatisfying facts. One is that it doesn't even make sense to think of autism as a single, discrete condition.

On the whole, autism is characterized by difficulty in social interactions and communication. But the diagnosis of autism covers people with a huge range of behaviors and symptoms, which are often arranged along the [autism spectrum](#).

These different forms of autism appear to be triggered by different, interacting causes. It's not genetics or environment, but both — a combination of inherited genes, random genetic mutations, and environmental factors like a mother's immune system and nutrition during pregnancy. In most cases, scientists still aren't sure exactly how these factors actually lead to the disorder.

Read full, original article: [Here's what we know about the causes of autism](#)