

# What causes psychosis?

The cause of psychosis is the result of an interaction between genes and the environment.

## Genes

Genes are the part of our body that control the way we are made – what colour hair we have or how tall we are. Genes also control how our brain is made and what types of chemicals we have working in our brain. We are born with our genes and we can not change them.

Some people are at a higher risk of developing psychosis because of their genes. Given that biological family members tend to have many of the same genes, a family history of psychosis indicates a person is at higher risk for developing psychosis.

But just because a person has a family history of psychosis doesn't mean that person will develop psychosis. Other factors in the environment need to be at work for psychosis to develop.

# Environment

**There are many factors in the environment that increase a person's risk of psychosis.** These include head injury, stressful life events, use of street drugs, being born in winter months, difficulty delivery at birth, immigration and being brought up in a big city.

A person with high genetic risk for psychosis may only need a few of these factors to trigger psychosis. A person with lower genetic risk may still experience psychosis if there are enough environmental factors.

**Think about what might have caused your psychosis.** Can you identify any genetic risk you might have? Or can you identify any environmental risks?

In the table below, place a check mark next to those items that you think apply to you. Then write a short description for the items you checked off.

**There may be other things that you think might have caused the psychosis.** Write down these other things as well.

Once you've done this, you will have a list of possible causes for your psychosis. **It is a good idea to discuss your list with your EPI Clinician.** He or she may have other ideas as well about what caused the psychosis. Remember that no one single factor causes psychosis - so there are no right or wrong answers here.

## Genes

Item	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Family history of psychosis	

## Environment

Item	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of street drugs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful life events	
<input type="checkbox"/> Immigration	
<input type="checkbox"/> Head injury	
<input type="checkbox"/> Being born in winter months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult delivery at birth	
<input type="checkbox"/> Being brought up in a big city	

## Other

Item	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	