



# NeuRA

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## SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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### What are the issues concerning parental age for people with schizophrenia?

Advanced parental age may increase the risks for the development of schizophrenia in the offspring. Commonly offered explanations have been the occurrence of germline mutations (that is, mutations that occur in the egg or sperm) in older adults, and/or psychological factors such as experiencing parental death at a vulnerable age. Pinpointing the age at which parenthood may be associated with a significantly higher risk of developing schizophrenia could be useful knowledge for potential parents, particularly if there is a pre-existing increased genetic risk of developing the disorder (ie; family history).

### What is the evidence regarding parental age as a risk factor for schizophrenia?

Moderate to high quality evidence suggests an increased risk of schizophrenia in adulthood when paternal age was over 35 years at birth, with risk greatest with paternal age over 54 years at birth. Moderate quality evidence also suggests an increased risk when paternal age was less than 20 to 25 years.

Moderate quality evidence finds a medium to large increased risk of schizophrenia when maternal age was under 17 years at birth, a small to medium increased risk of schizophrenia with maternal age less than 19 years, and a small increased risk with maternal age 20 to 30 years. There was a decreased risk of schizophrenia with maternal age over 30 years.

For more information see the technical table



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*NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.*

*Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.*

*Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.*

*While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*

## HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at [neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia](http://neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia).