





Obsessive compulsive disorder

Also called: OCD

Excessive thoughts (obsessions) that lead to repetitive behaviors (compulsions).

Common

More than 200,000 US cases per year

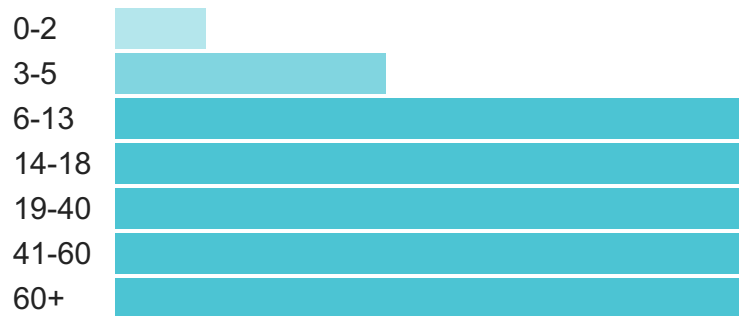
-  Can't be cured, but treatment may help
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging not required

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is characterized by unreasonable thoughts and fears (obsessions) that lead to compulsive behaviors.

OCD often centers on themes such as a fear of germs or the need to arrange objects in a specific manner. Symptoms usually begin gradually and vary throughout life.

Treatment includes talk therapy, medications, or both.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

OCD often centers on themes such as a fear of germs or the need to arrange objects in a specific manner. Symptoms usually begin gradually and vary throughout life.

People may experience:

Behavioral: compulsive behavior, agitation, compulsive hoarding, hypervigilance, impulsivity, meaningless repetition of own words, repetitive movements, ritualistic behavior, social isolation, or persistent repetition of words or actions

Mood: anxiety, apprehension, guilt, or panic attack

Psychological: depression, fear, or repeatedly going over thoughts

Also common: food aversion or nightmares

Treatments

Treatment consists of self care and therapy

Treatment includes talk therapy, medications, or both.

Medications

SSRI: Eases symptoms of depressed mood and anxiety.

- Sertraline (Zoloft)
- Escitalopram (Lexapro)
- Citalopram (Celexa)
- Fluvoxamine (Luvox)
- Fluoxetine (Prozac and Sarafem)
- Paroxetine (Paxil, Pexeva, and Brisdelle)

Anxiolytic: Relieves anxiety and tension. May promote sleep.

- Buspirone

Antidepressant: Prevents or relieves depression and elevates mood.

- Venlafaxine (Effexor)
- Clomipramine (Anafranil)

Therapies

Support group: A forum for counseling and sharing experiences among people with a similar condition or goal, such as depression or weight loss.

Cognitive behavioral therapy: Talk therapy that focuses on changing a person's thoughts in order to change their behavior and feelings.

Aversion therapy: Suppressing unwanted behavior, like smoking, by associating it with a negative experience, like an electric shock.

Psychoeducation: Teaching mentally ill people and their families how to deal with conditions such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia,

Rational emotive behavior therapy: Psychological treatment that helps people change negative, irrational thoughts and improve emotional well-being.

Exposure and response prevention: Psychological treatment that helps people face their fears and give up negative coping behaviors.

Psychotherapy: Treatment of mental or behavioral disorders through talk therapy.

Systematic desensitization: Psychological treatment that helps people overcome fears by gradually exposing them to the things they're afraid of.

Group psychotherapy: Talk therapy where the therapist works with clients in a group instead of one-on-one.

Specialists

Clinical psychologist: Treats mental disorders primarily with talk therapy.

Psychiatrist: Treats mental disorders primarily with medications.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.