

FACTSHEET: TOURETTE SYNDROME

What is Tourette Syndrome?

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations. It causes people to have tics which are sudden twitches, movements, or sounds that people do repeatedly.

Prevalence

- 1 out of 360 children 6-17 years of age in the US have been diagnosed with TS
- 37% have been reported as having moderate or severe forms of the condition
- Boys are more three to five times more likely to have it than girls
- Among children diagnosed with TS, 85% also have been diagnosed with at least one additional mental, behavioral, or developmental disability.
- Half of children with TS are not diagnosed.

Co-occurring Conditions

- ADHD- 63%
- Behavioral- 26%
- Anxiety problems- 49%
- Depression- 25%
- Autism Spectrum Disorder- 35%
- Learning disability- 47%
- Speech or language problems- 29%
- Developmental Delay- 28%

What Causes Tourette Syndrome?

It is unknown however, current research points to abnormalities in certain brain regions. The tics usually start in childhood and may increase in the early teens. Many people outgrow them.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Tics are often worse with excitement or anxiety and are better when the person is calm. There are two types of tics:

Motor Tics

- Arm or head jerking
- Blinking
- Making a face
- Mouth twitching
- Shoulder shrugging

Vocal Tics

- Barking
- Clearing your throat
- Coughing
- Grunting
- Repeating what someone else says
- Shouting
- Sniffing
- Swearing