

## **TICS AND TOURETTE DISORDER**

### **What are tics and Tourette Disorder?**

Tics are sudden movements or sounds that are repeated. Tics look or sound like normal movements or noises, but happen when someone doesn't want them to happen. Many people with tics say that they feel an urge to make these noises or movements. People with tics say the urge gets worse and worse until they do the tic. Often the person feels better after the tic. Tourette Disorder means that your child has both vocal and motor tics that have lasted more than a year.

### **When do tics or Tourette Disorder start?**

- Tics usually start between 4-8 years old, but can start any time between 2-15 years old.
- It is normal for tics to change over time.
- Tics may get worse as a child grows up. They are often their worst around age 11-13.
- Tics may get better or go away by age 20.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Tics are the main symptom of the disorder.

- Motor tics usually start as simple twitches, such as eye blinking or nose wrinkling and later may become complex movements such as a combination of movements.
- Vocal tics are repeated sounds. They usually start as sniffing, coughing or grunting, or repeating words. Less than 10% of children with tic disorders say bad words as their tic.

Other symptoms that can come with tic disorders include:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). May have a hard time staying on task, sitting still, or doing things without stopping to think about what will happen.
- Anxiety. May worry excessively about things.
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). May have repeated thoughts or do things over and over. This may include a fear of germs, a need for neatness, or counting objects.
- Oppositional-Defiant Disorder (ODD). May challenge people in power. They may lose their temper, argue, refuse to follow rules, or try to annoy people.
- Conduct Disorder (CD). May not follow rules or respect other people's basic rights. They may be physically mean to other people or animals, lie, steal, or destroy things.
- Learning problems. Most children with tics or Tourette Disorder have normal or above normal intelligence. Some children may have a hard time learning reading, spelling, or math.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

There is no test to diagnose tics. The diagnosis is made based on a detailed history.

- A health care provider will need to hear about when the movements or noises started, how they have changed over time, and how they are affecting your child. They will need to ask your child about what makes them do the noise or movement, if the movement makes their urge feel better, and how the movements or noises make them feel.
- It can be a good idea to videotape any sounds or movements that you see at home.

### **How are tics treated?**

Tics should be treated if they are making things hard for your child at home, school or sports.

- Medicine can help make the tics milder, but it will not make them go away.
- Habit Reversal Training (also known as CBIT) is a special way your child can learn to how to manage their tics.

Sometimes it is more important to treat the other problems such as ADHD, anxiety and OCD since they may make things harder for your child than his or her tics do.

### **What do I need to know to help my child?**

Tics may be a problem your child deals with for many years. Your child needs your help and sometimes a team of people to learn how to manage their tics at home, at school and in public.

- Your child does not want to do their tics and they do not do them on purpose.
- Make sure that everyone at home and school “ignores the tic, but not the child”.
- Tell your child’s teacher that they are not making noises or movements on purpose.
- Work with your child’s teacher to come up with a plan to help your child learn best.
- Remind your child that tics are something they have, but not who they are.
- Help your child stick up for him/herself by telling teachers, coaches, friends, or classmates about his or her tics.
- Learn more information about tics and Tourette Disorder to help others learn what they can do to help your child do their best.

### **Tic Resources**

- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Tourette Syndrome Fact Sheet [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tourette/detail\\_tourette.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tourette/detail_tourette.htm)
- Tourette Association of America [www.tourette.org](http://www.tourette.org)
- Tourette Canada [www.tourette.ca](http://www.tourette.ca)
- Child & Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) [www.leakybrakes.ca](http://www.leakybrakes.ca)

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