

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE **DISORDER**

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Introduction

- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER) is an anxiety disorder in which time people have recurring, unwanted thoughts, ideas or sensations (obsessions) that make them feel driven to do something repetitively (compulsions). The repetitive behaviors, such as hand washing, checking on things or cleaning, can significantly interfere with a person's daily activities and social interactions.

- Many people have focused thoughts or repeated behaviors. But these do not disrupt daily life and may add structure or make tasks easier. For people with OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER, thoughts are persistent and unwanted routines and behaviors are rigid and not doing them causes great distress. Many people with obsessive-compulsive disorder know or suspect their obsessions are not true; others may think they could be true (known as poor insight). Even if they know their obsessions are not true, people with obsessive-compulsive disorder have a hard time keeping their focus off the obsessions or stopping the compulsive actions.

- A diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder requires the presence of obsession and/or compulsions that are time-consuming (more than one hour a day), cause major distress, and impair work, social or other important function. Among adults slightly more women than man are affected. Obsessive-compulsive disorder often begins in childhood, adolescence or early adulthood; the average age symptoms appear is 19 years old.

Obsessions

- Obsessions are recurrent and persistent thoughts, impulses, or images that cause distressing emotions such as anxiety or disgust. Many people with obsessive-compulsive disorder recognize that the thoughts, impulses, or images are a product of their mind and are excessive or unreasonable. Yet these intrusive thoughts cannot be settled by logic or reasoning. Most people with obsessive-compulsive disorder try to ignore or suppress such obsessions or offset them with some other thought or action. Typical obsessions include excessive concerns about contamination or harm, the need for symmetry or exactness, or forbidden sexual or religious thoughts.



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Compulsions

- Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession. The behaviors are aimed at preventing or reducing distress or a feared situation. In the most severe cases, a constant repetition of rituals may fill the day, making a normal routine impossible. Compounding the anguish these rituals cause is the knowledge that the compulsions are irrational. Although the compulsion may bring some relief to the worry, the obsession returns and the cycle repeats over and over.

Some examples of compulsions:

- Cleaning to reduce the fear that germs, dirt, or chemicals will "contaminate" them some spend many hours washing themselves or cleaning their surroundings. Some people spend many hours washing themselves or cleaning their surroundings.
- Repeating to dispel anxiety. Some people utter a name or phrase or repeat a behavior several times. They know these repetitions won't actually guard against injury but fear harm will occur if the repetitions aren't done.

- Checking to reduce the fear of harming oneself or others by, for example, forgetting to lock the door or turn off the gas stove, some people develop checking rituals. Some people repeatedly retrace driving routes to be sure they haven't hit anyone.
- Ordering and arranging to reduce discomfort. Some people like to put objects, such as books in a certain order, or arrange household items “just so,” or in a symmetric fashion.
- Mental compulsions to response to intrusive obsessive thoughts, some people silently pray or say phrases to reduce anxiety or prevent a dreaded future event.





How Is **OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER** Diagnosed?

- There is no lab test to diagnose obsessive-compulsive disorder. The doctor bases his or her diagnosis on an assessment of the patient's symptoms, including how much time the person spends performing his or her ritual behaviors.

How Is OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER Treated?

- obsessive-compulsive disorder will not go away by itself, so it is important to seek treatment. The most effective approach to treating obsessive-compulsive disorder combines [medications](#) with cognitive behavioral therapy.

Thank You