

What IS TOURETTE SYNDROME?



Tourette's

Association of New Zealand

Supporting kiwis living with tic disorders

AN OVERVIEW OF TOURETTE SYNDROME

Tourette Syndrome is a complex neurological disorder that is unpredictable, uncontrollable and incredibly misunderstood.

The diagnostic criteria for Tourette Syndrome states that at least two motor tics and a vocal tic must occur concurrently for more than a year before the age of 18.

Often motor tics occur first, usually affecting the eyes or face. Excessive blinking is often the first tic that parents notice in children. Tics are sudden, often happening without warning and are not purposeful behaviour.

A diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome may be given after the age of 18 if the frequency or severity of tics occurs in adulthood however there must be evidence of tics in childhood.

The frequency and severity of tics can intensify within a short time frame, seemingly appearing with a sudden "onset".

A sudden 'onset' of tics does not meet the criteria for Tourette Syndrome however mild tics would have been present in childhood or early adolescence but were never problematic nor impacted the individual's day-to-day life.

Often comorbid disorders like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Sensory Processing Disorders, rage/anger appear before tics.

You do not grow out of Tourette Syndrome. It is a neurological disorder which can lessen in severity and frequency; or the individual learns to manage the tics better as they age.

Females often develop a more abrupt onset closer to puberty due to the intensive physical and neurological changes that occur.



TICS ARE PHYSICAL AND VOCAL
TOURETTE'S IS NEUROLOGICAL

TYPES OF *tics*

Common motor tics:



- excessive eye blinking or eye rolling
- clenching of the jaw or shoulders
- excessive neck twitches
- imitating others actions
- biting and hitting oneself
- pulling out eyelashes or hair
- smelling or sniffing things



Common vocal tics:

- coughing or throat clearing
- grunting
- throat clearing
- shrieking
- whistling
- animal sounds
- repeating others words or phrases



TICS ARE SUGGESTIBLE AND CAN MIMIC SOMEONE ELSE'S TICS.



The tics occur 24 hours a day – even when asleep!

Often sleep can be disrupted or even prevented due to the nature of tics. Tiredness can also trigger an onset of tics.

AN OVERVIEW OF TOURETTE SYNDROME

All of the symptoms of Tourette Syndrome wax and wane and changes can happen overnight. There can be periods of time when the tics are so mild that they seem to have disappeared.

Some people can suppress their tics for a short time however this can result in an explosion of tics when they no longer can contain the urge to tic.



Medication does not cause Tourette Syndrome; ADHD medication like Ritalin can exacerbate tics in those pre-disposed to a tic disorder like Tourette Syndrome but it does not CAUSE Tourette Syndrome.¹

Tic disorders can develop as a result of a brain injury or abuse of recreational drugs and alcohol or as a result of a medical misadventure – these however, are not diagnostically Tourette Syndrome.²



There is no cure for Tourette Syndrome and no scientific evidence that a change in diet cures Tourette Syndrome.

While you can't cure TS it is possible to manage tic activity or the impact of tics with the likes of CBIT, using diversion techniques and CBD products which can reduce tic frequency and severity.

The use of magnesium for muscle recovery and melatonin to aid sleep can lessen the impact the tics have on the body.

Often siblings of a child with Tourette Syndrome have a comorbid disorder like ASD, anxiety, OCD or ADHD.

It is common for comorbid disorders such as OCD, ADHD, anger/rage, sleep disorders, Anxiety and/or Sensory Processing Disorder to present before Tourette Syndrome is diagnosed.

Because ADHD and OCD are often diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome, this combination is commonly referred to as the Tourette's Triad.

Quite simply Tourette Syndrome is a disorder whereby the individual can not control motor and vocal tics. Other behavioural disorders like rage or ODD are not caused by Tourette Syndrome.



1. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Vol 52: 12 (Dec 2013) p. 1344.

2. European Child Adolescent Psychiatry (2011) 20:155-171 p.156.

DID YOU *know?*



6 IN 1000 ARE BORN WITH TOURETTE'S

... HOWEVER AROUND 50 PER CENT OF THIS POPULATION NEVER DEVELOP PROBLEMATIC TICS AND NEVER SEEK A DIAGNOSIS.

80%

Approximately 80% of children with Tourette Syndrome have a comorbid disorder.

10%

!@#%

Coprolalia, the swearing tic, only affects 10% of those diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome.

The Tourette's Association of New Zealand (TANZ) is a registered charitable trust.

It was established in 2013 to provide support and information services to New Zealanders living with Tourette Syndrome. TANZ offers peer-to-peer support for those living with Tourette Syndrome as well as to parents of children diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome. It also provides professional development sessions to the health and education sectors.

For more information please connect with us online, or contact Robyn Twemlow: robyn@tourettes.org.nz

*tic loud and
tic proud.
give a tic.*