

OCD Fact Sheet

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- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a treatable neurobiological disorder characterized by **recurrent, unwanted thoughts** (obsessions) and **repetitive behaviors** (compulsions/rituals)
- OCD impacts 1 in every 40 adults and 1 in every 100 children (2-3 million adults and half a million youth in the US)
- The exact cause of OCD is unknown, although research shows there may be a genetic component.
- OCD usually first appears in childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood.
- OCD is treatable and effective treatment is available. The most effective treatment for OCD is Exposure with Response Prevention (ERP) or ERP with a combination of medication.
- OCD affects Women and Men equally.
- On average, it takes 9 years for an OCD sufferer to get the proper diagnosis and treatment.
- You cannot be a “little OCD”. It is not a personality trait or quirk. If what you are doing brings you pleasure, it is not OCD. OCD is a true debilitating mental health condition that causes a magnitude of anxiety and distress. People with OCD try to overcome the anxiety or distress by performing rituals or “compulsions”. It’s not something they want to do, it something they feel they must do in order to receive relief from the anxiety or distress.
- OCD is not about being neat or clean. Many people think of handwashing or neatness when they first think about OCD. However, there are a wide range of OCD triggers, symptoms, obsessions, and compulsions. Obsessions could include fearing of harming oneself or others, losing control or moral failings. Compulsion can include reassurance seeking, ruminating, checking, avoidance, or counting.

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