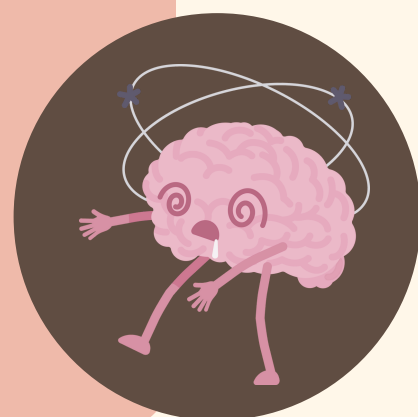


# OCD and How it Affects Children and Teens

## What is OCD?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a mental health disorder that affects people of all ages and walks of life experience obsessions (persistent, intrusive thoughts, images, or urges) and compulsions (repetitive behaviors or mental acts) aimed at reducing anxiety caused by the obsessions.



## Common Symptoms in Children and Teens

### Obsessions may include

- Fear of germs, illness, or contamination
- Worry about harm occurring to themselves or others
- Intrusive thoughts about symmetry or exactness
- Fear of making mistakes or doing something wrong

### Compulsions may involve

- Excessive washing or cleaning
- Repeated checking (e.g., locks, schoolwork)
- Counting or repeating actions
- Arranging items in a precise way
- Seeking reassurance excessively



## How OCD Affects Daily Life

**School:** Difficulty concentrating, completing assignments, or fear of making mistakes.

**Social Life:** Avoiding activities, isolating themselves due to fears or compulsions.

**Home:** Family tension may arise due to the child's repetitive behaviors or need for reassurance.

## Diagnosis

A licensed mental health professional conducts an evaluation through:

- Interviews with the child, family, and sometimes teachers
- Questionnaires to assess the severity of symptoms
- Rule out other mental health conditions



## Treatment Options

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Specifically, Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is the most effective therapy. It helps children gradually face their fears without performing compulsions.
- **Medication:** Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) may be prescribed for moderate to severe cases.
- **Family Involvement:** Families play a crucial role in supporting therapy, learning to respond to OCD-related behaviors without reinforcing them.



## Tips for Parents

- **Stay Patient:** OCD is a chronic condition, but with treatment, symptoms can be managed effectively.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about OCD to better understand what your child is going through.
- **Avoid Reassurance:** Providing constant reassurance can reinforce OCD patterns.
- **Support Therapy:** Encourage your child to attend therapy sessions and practice coping strategies.



## Prognosis

With proper treatment, many kids and teens see a significant reduction in symptoms and can lead normal, healthy lives. Early intervention is key to better long-term outcomes.

## Resources

- [International OCD Foundation \(IOCDF\)](#)
- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#)
- [Child Mind Institute](#): Offers guides and resources for parents

