

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



What is it?

- OCD affects 1 in 100 adults
- People with OCD have unwanted thoughts that get stuck
- These thoughts make them feel worried or uncomfortable
- To feel better, they do the same actions over and over (called rituals)
- OCD makes daily tasks and relationships difficult
- People don't choose to have OCD
- With help, many people with OCD can get better



What can cause it?

- It may run in families and involve brain differences
- Certain brain chemicals and brain circuits may not work right in people with OCD
- Stress or tough experiences in life can worsen or trigger OCD
- People who worry a lot might have a higher chance of getting OCD
- OCD is not caused by bad parenting or a person's choices

*Many things can work together to cause OCD.
Health professionals are still learning about all the
causes of OCD.*

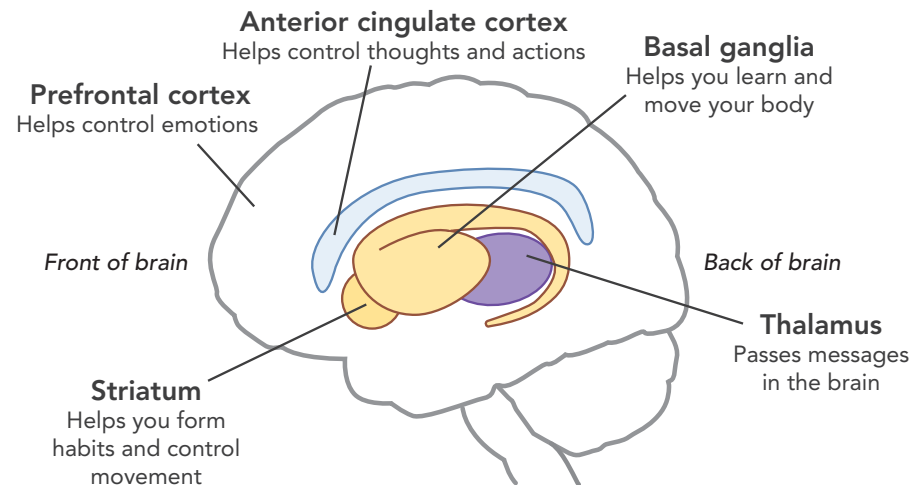


What are common signs?

- Unwanted thoughts that keep coming back (for example, worrying about germs or getting sick)
- Feeling very worried or scared about these thoughts
- Doing the same actions over and over (for example, washing hands or counting things a special way)
- Spending a lot of time on these thoughts or actions
- Having trouble stopping these thoughts or actions
- Feeling upset or having problems at work or with friends because of these thoughts or actions



How does it affect the brain?



In OCD, these parts of the brain don't work together like they should.

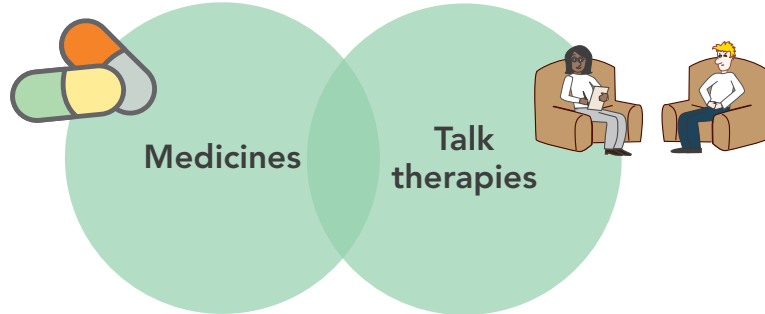


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How can it be treated?

Try this first:



If regular treatments don't work well (hard-to-treat OCD):



Your health professional can help you choose the best treatment or combinations of treatments. Sometimes, people need to try different treatments before they find what works best.



When should I seek help?

- Your OCD thoughts or actions are hard to control
- You spend more than an hour a day on OCD behaviors
- OCD makes it hard to do your job or daily tasks
- OCD hurts your relationships with family or friends

Get help right away if you:

- You think about hurting yourself
- You feel like you can't go on living
- Your OCD suddenly gets much worse
- You can't eat, sleep, or take care of yourself because of your OCD



Where can I get more help?

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline—Call or text 988

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)—[nami.org](https://www.nami.org)

International OCD Foundation—[iocdf.org](https://www.iocdf.org)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ OCD is a brain condition, not a choice
- ✓ It causes upsetting thoughts and strong urges to repeat actions
- ✓ OCD can make everyday life hard
- ✓ It's not because you did something wrong
- ✓ Talk therapy and medicines can help, and many people with OCD get better



Neuroscience Education Institute

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