

What are the Symptoms of OCD?



Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) includes two main groups of symptoms: obsessions and compulsions. A child or teen diagnosed with OCD can experience one or both types of symptoms.

OBSESSIONS are constant unwanted thoughts or worries about a specific topic, or mental rituals that must be completed to reduce feelings of anxiety, shame or doubt. Among kids and teens with OCD, the most common obsessions include:

- Fear of dirt or germs
- Fear of contamination
- A need for symmetry, order and precision
- Religious obsessions
- Preoccupation with body wastes
- Lucky and unlucky numbers
- Aggressive thoughts
- Fear of illness or harm coming to oneself or relatives
- Intrusive sounds or words



COMPULSIONS are repetitive behaviors that someone feels compelled to do in response to their obsessions or an inflexible set of rules. These ritualized behavioral responses are intended to reduce the emotional discomfort that's related to obsessions. Examples include repeated handwashing, checking and rechecking, or arranging items in a particular way. These compulsions are the most common among kids and teens:

- Grooming rituals, including hand washing, showering and teeth brushing
- Repeating rituals, including going in and out of doorways, needing to move through spaces in a special way, or rereading, erasing and rewriting
- Checking rituals to make sure that an appliance is off or a door is locked, and repeatedly checking homework
- Touching rituals
- Rituals to undo contact with a "contaminated" person or object
- Rituals to prevent harming self or others
- Ordering or arranging objects
- Counting rituals
- Hoarding and collecting things of no apparent value
- Cleaning rituals related to the house or other items

