

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Tourette Syndrome

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Tourette syndrome (TS) is a neurological condition that involves sudden, involuntary movements and/or vocalizations, which are called tics. Tics are classified as motor or vocal, either simple or complex and the severity of the tics can range from mild to severe. They may also negatively affect communication, daily functioning and quality of life.

The early symptoms of TS are typically noticed first in childhood and affects males three to four times more than females. Most people with TS experience their worst tic symptoms in their early teens. These symptoms usually improve in the late teens and throughout adulthood. Tics often become worse with excitement or anxiety and better during calm activities.

Conditions often associated with Tourette syndrome include:

- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Learning disabilities
- Sleep disorders
- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Pain related to tics, especially headaches
- Anger-management problems



Motor Tics (Movement)

- **Simple motor** – sudden, repetitive movements that involve a limited number of muscle groups. Common simple tics include but are not limited to eye blinking, facial grimacing, shoulder shrugging, and head jerking.
- **Complex motor** – distinct, coordinated patterns of movements involve several muscle groups and combinations of movements. Complex motor tics might include facial grimacing combined with a head twist and a shoulder shrug. Other complex motor tics may include sniffing or touching objects, hopping, jumping, bending, or twisting.



Vocal Tics (Sounds)

- **Simple vocal** – sudden, repetitive tics that involve a limited number of muscle groups. These include but are not limited to repetitive throat clearing, grunting, barking, hooting, and shouting.
- **Complex vocal** – words or phrases that may or may not be recognizable but that consistently occur out of context.



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(cont.)

Educational Setting for Children with Tourette?

Students should always be placed in an educational setting that meets their individual needs. Students with TS may exhibit learning disabilities, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and ADHD. Frequent tics can negatively impact academic performance. Students may benefit from tutoring, smaller or special classes, and the option to complete classwork in a quiet area. Untimed testing will also reduce the stress level for students with TS.



Resources:

"What is Tourette?" (2019) Retrieved 8-5-19 from <https://tourette.org/about-tourette/overview/what-is-tourette/>

"Tourette Syndrome Fact Sheet" (2019) Retrieved 8-5-19 from <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Tourette-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>

"Tourette Syndrome" (2018) Retrieved 8-5-19 from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tourette-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20350465>

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