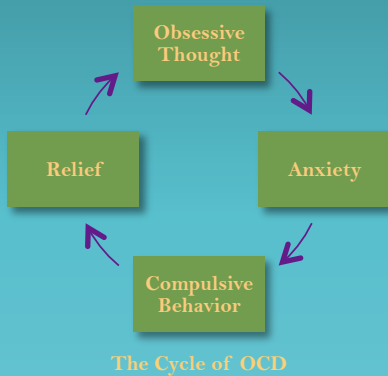


Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

What is OCD?

OCD is an anxiety disorder that is characterized by recurrent, intrusive, and sometimes disturbing thoughts (*obsessions*) as well as urges to perform ritualistic or repetitive behaviors (*compulsions*). In an attempt to control the anxiety associated with obsessions, a person with OCD often engages in specific behaviors or rituals. This may provide temporary relief from anxiety. However, over time, compulsions actually increase anxiety and interfere with daily life.



Examples of Obsessions

- Worries about safety or contamination
- Unwanted thoughts of aggression towards loved ones
- Intrusive disturbing images
- Fear of losing control or being responsible for negative outcomes
- Unwanted sexual thoughts
- Excessive concern about wrongdoing
- Desire for perfection
- Superstitious beliefs

Examples of Compulsions

- Washing and cleaning excessively
- Checking things over and over again (e.g., checking for mistakes)
- Repeating tasks and behaviors several times or in multiples (e.g., tapping, blinking, etc.)
- Counting to a certain number
- Praying
- Seeking reassurance from others
- Organizing items in a particular manner that “feels right”
- Hoarding items

What are other facts about OCD?

- ◆ About 20% of people with OCD will experience obsessions alone and 10% will experience compulsions alone.
- ◆ It is difficult to control unwanted thoughts or behaviors even though they are recognized as irrational or excessive.
- ◆ Approximately 2-3% of the population is estimated to have OCD, affecting men and women at equal rates.
- ◆ The cause of OCD is still unknown, but may involve a combination of neurobiological, genetic, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors.

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How is OCD treated?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps teach people more effective ways to think and behave in order to manage anxiety.

Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is a specific type of CBT that has been shown to reduce obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors in people with OCD. ERP consists of increasing exposure to situations that may trigger obsessions while preventing or reducing the typical compulsive response. Over time, this can reduce or eliminate anxiety.

Medication

Medication may also help treat symptoms of OCD. The most commonly prescribed medications for OCD are antidepressants specifically Serotonin-Selective Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs). Be sure to talk to your doctor about your symptoms to determine the best treatment option for you.

OCD can be treated with CBT alone or with medication alone. However, research generally supports that a combination of the two treatments is the most effective approach to treat OCD.



Who do I contact to find out more?

Referrals for cognitive behavioral therapy and medication management can be made by physicians, mental health professionals, other allied health professionals, or from the patient or family directly. If interested, please contact us as listed below.

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