

What is Tourette syndrome?

Is it just tics?

How can I help?

Are there linked conditions?

## **What is Tourette's syndrome, what is a tic?**

**Tourette's Syndrome also known as Tourette's Disorder is a complex neurological movement disorder.**

**Tourette's is characterised by involuntary movements and vocalisations; these are more commonly known as motor or vocal tics.**

**Tourette's syndrome occurs three to four times more frequently in boys than girls.**

**Sometimes Tourette syndrome can be misinterpreted as an intentional behaviour due to the way tics can be suggestive and contextual.**

**It is thought that there is a chemical imbalance called dopamine that is involved with Tourette syndrome.**

**What is Tourette syndrome?**

**Cont.....**

**There is no medical test for Tourette's syndrome and there is at present no cure for Tourette's syndrome either.**

**Tourette's is diagnosed by observation. There is 5 criterion that must be observed to gain a diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome.:**

- 1) Multiple motor tics**
- 2) Minimum of 1 vocal tic**
- 3) An increase and decrease in symptoms**
- 4) Onset from childhood**
- 5) Symptoms lasting for a minimum of one year.**

**The definition of a motor tic: a rapid, recurrent, repetitive movement of any muscle group in your body.**

**Tics can be simple or complex!**

**Simple motor tics are the easiest to recognise and they only affect one muscle group these may look like, blinking, finger tapping, lip smacking, head shaking or facial grimacing.**

**Although they look minimal, they can still interfere with a child's daily wellbeing, especially if the frequency of these minor tics is high.**

**What is Tourette syndrome?**

**Cont.....**

**Complex motor tics are more complicated movements that involve more than one muscle group these could be, hopping, clapping, tummy tensing, whole body bending, inappropriate gestures.**

**Vocal tics are the repetition of sound, words or phrases these can also present as a change in speech pattern, voice reflection or accent.**

**Simple vocal tics involve making a noise, complex vocal tics are usually something linguistically meaningful.**

**An example of a simple vocal tic could be snorting, throat clearing, kissing, coughing or sighing. Examples of complex vocal tic could be phrases or words that may/may not be in context.**

**The phenomenon of tics increasing, and decreasing is called waxing and waning, this means that tics can naturally change overtime, however tics can also change depending on environmental factors such as illness, excitement, stress, fatigue and anxiety.**

**Although tics are involuntary, some people do have the ability to suppress symptoms for short periods of time.**

**What is Tourette syndrome?**

**Cont.....**

**There are also tic disorders that a child may have other than Tourette syndrome:**

**A chronic motor or vocal tic disorder: this presents itself as one or two tics, that start in childhood, they don't change and don't really go away, they may change in frequency and intensity. It is quite common for family members of someone with Tourette syndrome to have a chronic or motor or vocal tic disorder.**

**A transient tic disorder: it is thought that as many as one in ten children will have simple motor or vocal tics at some point during their school years, they usually occur in just one muscle group and last no more than a few weeks or months. Transient tics can become more noticeable when a child is stressed, tired or excited.**

**These tics develop quickly, they last for a short period of time and you rarely see them again.**

**Although there is not a cure for Tourette's syndrome there is both medical and behavioural treatment available to help with the management of symptoms.**