



### Getting Help

- If you think you may have OCD, talk to a counselor or health care provider
- Searching the web may also aid in finding out more about the illness, and provide further information on new treatment options, or other organizations that can offer assistance.

Remember, there is help out there. If you feel you are suffering from OCD, please don't wait to seek treatment. If you feel a friend or family member may be affected by OCD, tell them of your concerns and encourage them to seek professional help.

**OCD CAN BE TREATED! YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

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# Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior

OCD and Your Health

Everyone has certain habits, whether good or bad. Some people smoke, some prefer alcohol, and some people simply have a habit of biting their fingernails. However, there are some people who have become trapped in a pattern of repetitive thoughts and behaviors that are impossible for them to overcome on their own. This behavior is known as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

### Common Symptoms of OCD

- ◇ Fear of contamination by germs or radiation
- ◇ Fear of hitting someone with a car
- ◇ Fear of burning the house down
- ◇ Fear a family member will die
- ◇ Fear of harming others or violating social norms
- ◇ Excessive personal or house cleaning (scrubbing skin until it bleeds or the walls until they are stripped of paint. Some wash their hands or take showers for hours on end.)
- ◇ Checking—developing a time consuming ritual of making sure, over and over, that a curling iron is turned off or repeatedly driving over the same route to make sure an accident has not occurred and that no one is injured.

### Who Gets OCD?

- Anyone can be affected by OCD
- It strikes people of any race, creed or gender
- Symptoms usually appear during the teenage years or in young adulthood

### Is OCD Common?

- In earlier years, it was thought that OCD was a rare illness, since so few people seemed to exhibit symptoms
- There is a belief now, however, that those who suffer from OCD are not seeking treatment, because they want to hide their repetitive thoughts and behaviors. Because of this, it is difficult to tell just how common OCD really is.
- A recent study by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has found that OCD may affect at least 2 percent of the population.



### Treatment of OCD

- If you or someone you know is suffering from OCD, help them to seek treatment
- People with OCD are particularly good at hiding their symptoms
- A person with OCD may be put on medication in order to help relieve their symptoms
- Behavioral therapy may also be implemented. While traditional psychotherapy doesn't seem to help those affected by OCD, a behavior therapy known as "exposure and response prevention" seems to be the most effective in helping those with OCD.
- This particular therapy is a way that the person can, in a sense, be weaned off of their compulsive behaviors slowly.

