

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

People with **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** have unwanted thoughts, impulses, or images – also known as obsessions- that are impossible to contain, therefore causing anxiety, stress, or worry as well as repetitive, ritualistic actions – called compulsions- that are acting to decrease the anxiety caused by the obsessions.

Risk Factors:

- Negative temperaments and behavioral inhibition
- Having a first-degree relative with a history of OCD
- Children who have experienced abuse, extreme stress, or traumatic events are at higher risk
- Genetic and environmental variables

Types of Obsessions:

- Contamination (germs, waste, bodily fluids, etc.)
- Symmetry (lack of which would cause bad things to happen)
- Fear of harm or responsibility of harm (parent might get hurt, car might burn, etc.)
- Aggression (fear of hurting a small animal or baby, among others)

Treatment for OCD

Psychotherapies, especially **cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** best treat those suffering from OCD. One highly effective form of CBT is **exposure and response prevention**, which challenges the child to directly face objects of obsessions in a controlled environment while avoiding compulsive behaviors.

Pharmacological treatments (medications) are also effective in more severe cases of OCD.