

Tic Disorders

A tic is when a part of the body moves repeatedly, quickly, suddenly, or uncontrollably. Tics can occur in any part of the body, but are most common in the face, shoulders, hands, or legs. In addition, some tics can be vocal. A vocal tic is when a child makes sounds or speaks involuntarily.

Tics can range from mild to severe. Most tics are mild and hardly noticeable. However, in some cases, they are frequent and severe and can affect a child's ability to function in many different areas, including at home, school, and work.

The different types of tic disorders in children include:

- **CHRONIC TIC DISORDER:** With this disorder, a child has either one or more motor or vocal tics that last for more than a year. This type of tic disorder is rare. In some cases, chronic tics may be a sign of Tourette's Disorder (p98).
- **TRANSIENT TIC DISORDER:** A child with this disorder has multiple motor and/or vocal tics that last for at least a month, but not more than a year. Tics are usually mild and hard to notice, but may increase in frequency when a child is tired, nervous, or stressed. Transient Tic Disorder is the most common type of tic disorder in children. This disorder goes away on its own and does not require treatment.

EVALUATION AND DIAGNOSIS

Tic disorders can be very stressful for children, especially due to the other children's reactions to the tics. Tic disorders can be diagnosed at any time in childhood. If you think that your child has a tic disorder, your child may need a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation. For more information, turn to **MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATIONS (p39)**.

TREATMENT

If your child has Transient Tic Disorder, the tics will go away on their own, and your child does not require treatment. If your child has Chronic Tic Disorder or another type of tic disorder, treatment depends on the type of tics, but may include medication to control the symptoms and psychoeducation. For more information, turn to **MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT (p147)**.



Up to 10% of children may have transient tics during their early school years.