

Mental Health Carers Service Information & Advice Sheets

Tourette Syndrome

Tourette syndrome symptoms generally appear before the age of 18. First symptoms are usually mild facial tics, such as eye blinking. A range of symptoms can also develop, from 'motor' tics that affect the face/neck muscles, through to those that affect other areas of the body & limbs. 'Vocal' tics can also be present, ranging from a simple clearing of the throat, through to grunts, sniffing noises & barks. Obscene words may be used, alongside repetition of the words of others, or of their own words.

There is a spectrum of Tourette syndrome & other, more debilitating aspects may be present – such as obsessional compulsive disorder (OCD), learning disabilities, and depression.

The syndrome does not affect a person's IQ, & they have a normal life span. Males are affected 3 or 4 times more often than females.

Although there is no cure, there are treatments available.

The cause of the syndrome is not known, but is probably caused in part by abnormal genes, that alter how the brain uses its chemical transmitters.

Some people benefit from medication, if the symptoms are of a more severe nature.