



## What is Tourette's Syndrome?

With Tourette's Syndrome, which usually starts in childhood, **individuals feel an irresistible urge to make sounds and body movements** that are beyond their control. These uncontrollable movements and sounds are called tics.

For people with Tourette's Syndrome, **tics can be extremely distressing**, only bringing relief once they have been expressed. In some cases, they might blurt out obscenities - an element of Tourette's Syndrome that is rare, and one that has been unfairly exaggerated in movies and television shows.

**Tics often increase with tension, and decrease with relaxation** or when focusing on an absorbing task. Although it is a newly recognized condition, Dr. Georges Gilles de la Tourette (after whom the condition is named) described nine cases in 1885.

While Tourette's Syndrome is often thought of as a type of mental illness, **Tourette's Syndrome is actually classified as a neurological (brain) disorder.**

## Diagnosing Tourettes Syndrome

If you notice your child displaying unusual movements or behavior, pay a visit to your health care professional, as the **first sign of Tourette's Syndrome is often a facial tic.**

When [diagnosing Tourettes Syndrome](#), it is important to remember that almost all people with Tourette's Syndrome experience tics, but **just because a person has a tic, it doesn't mean they have Tourette's Syndrome.** Many children develop tics that last for a few weeks or months and then go away on their own.

The **best treatment plan begins with an accurate and thorough diagnosis.** Unfortunately **there is no specific test used in [diagnosing Tourettes Syndrome](#)** that can be used. Instead, doctors must rely on the history of the person's symptoms.

Although there is no such thing as a "typical" case of Tourette's Syndrome, the condition follows a fairly reliable course in terms of the age of onset and the history and severity of symptoms. [Symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome](#) are incorrectly attributed to behavioral problems.

In preparing to visit the specialist, it is **useful to record a diary of the tics**, including situations which make them worse and how often they happen. Your

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doctor will want to know whether tics are causing school or social problems for your child.

Your child may also need psychological testing and screenings for learning problems. Your doctor may ask whether you have noticed signs of other problems for which your child is at increased risk, such as depression or anxiety disorders.

Some **emotional or mental conditions may accompany Tourette's-type symptoms**, which can lead to incorrect diagnosis. This makes it very important to have a comprehensive and professional assessment so that an accurate diagnosis can be determined – as this will affect the type of treatment chosen.

## Types of Motor & Vocal Tics

### Examples of Simple Motor Tics:

- Eye blinking or darting
- Head jerking
- Finger flexing
- Sticking tongue out

### Examples of Complex Motor Tics:

- Touching the nose or other people
- Smelling objects
- Obscene gestures or flapping arms
- Jumping or twirling about
- In rare cases, self-injurious actions, including hitting or biting oneself

### Examples of Simple Vocal Tics:

- Throat clearing, tongue clicking, yelping, or sniffing

### Examples of Complex Vocal Tics:

- Uttering words or phrases randomly and blurting out offensive words


## What Causes Tourette's Syndrome?

The **exact cause of Tourette's Syndrome is unknown**, and there is no known way to prevent it. Theories about the causes of Tourette's include:

- Genetics
- Brain structure abnormalities
- Brain chemical abnormalities
- Infections

## Help for Tourette's Syndrome

There is no known cure for Tourette's Syndrome, so **treatment focuses on managing tics** and helping the individual to adjust to live with the disorder. Individuals that show symptoms of Tourette's should have a full and thorough



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



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Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

evaluation.

There are a **wide range of treatment options available** for symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome, which may involve counseling, learning coping techniques, medication, and natural remedies.

All of these are aimed at assisting the person with Tourette's (and their family) in learning to cope with the disorder. The **best results are usually obtained by combining a selection of treatment options**, depending on the individual needs of the sufferer.

It is important for parents of newly diagnosed children to spend some time investigating the different avenues of treatment. Be sure to discuss possibilities with your health care provider.

## Treatment Options for Tourette's Syndrome

### Drug therapy

Prescription medication is the most commonly used conventional approach for treating [symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome](#), but in most cases, it can be avoided. Although drugs may sometimes be effective, they should be used as part of a broader treatment plan. Due to the **frequent side effects of these drugs**, people on prescription medication should be closely monitored.

As an incorrect choice of **drugs may cause symptoms to become worse**, it is strongly advised that you research these drugs thoroughly and make an informed decision.

### Natural herbal and homeopathic remedies

As always, a holistic approach which addresses not only the Tourette's but the individual in his or her social, educational, and family context is always the best approach. There are a number of **herbal and homeopathic ingredients which may be of assistance without the negative side effects** of prescription drugs. Discuss this option with your doctor, or consult a homeopath or naturopath for advice.

### Counseling and psychotherapy

Counseling can assist a person with Tourette's Syndrome, and help his or her family cope. It is **important to make family members understand** and help the person with Tourette's, as well as manage the patient's own stress over the condition if necessary. This can be effective in helping patients deal with low self-esteem or other feelings that have arisen as a result of the disorder.

### Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)

Widely accepted as an **evidence-based, cost-effective psychotherapy** for many disorders, cognitive behavioral therapy has been used with children and adolescents to **treat a variety of conditions with good success**.

### Coping techniques: habit reversal training (HRT)

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Intended to increase tic awareness, develop a response strategy to the tic, and motivate the individual to keep a consistent and positive attitude to treatment. Controlled trials have demonstrated that HRT is an **acceptable, tolerable, effective, and durable treatment** for tics.

### **Coping techniques: relaxation**

Exercise, yoga, or meditation, may be useful drug-free approaches to **relieving the stress that may aggravate tics**. Frequently, the tics subside with explanation, reassurance, and understanding of the condition in a supportive environment.

### **Special educational needs for children**

It is important to inform the school when a child has Tourette's syndrome and to **ensure that teachers understand the condition**. Although most children with Tourette's disorder have average IQ, some may have special education needs as a result of associated disorders.

Other treatments include **deep brain stimulation (DBS)** and **brain surgery**, both of which are serious procedures and should be carefully considered, as they may pose a high risk to the patient.

## **Tips for Coping with Tourette's Syndrome**

- **Stay positive.** Remember that tics usually lessen in severity with age, usually reaching their peak in the early teens to mid teens. This concept may be hard for a young child to think about, but it may offer hope that life won't always be this way.
- **Stay physically active.** Get involved in physical activities or hobbies. Research indicates that being engrossed in activities can help reduce the frequency and severity of tics.
- **Stay mentally active.** If you must be in a public place for a while, such as on an airplane or bus, take something to occupy your mind, such as a crossword puzzles, story book, or sketchbooks.
- **Reach out.** Connect with others dealing with Tourette's Syndrome for support and information

## **Tips for Concerned Parents**

There are many ways you as a parent can help your child with [symptoms of Tourettes Syndrome](#). Here are a few examples:

- **Educate** yourself and others about the condition.
- **Understand** how the tics affect your child, and make changes at home and school to best accommodate them.
- **Keep a record** of your child's tics-- when they get worse, and the events that surround them. This may help identify triggers. Be careful not to cause your child more stress - approach this in a way that makes your child feel secure.
- **Realize** tics are not on purpose. Although tics may frustrate you, do not punish your child for having tics, and try not to show any frustration you may feel. Doing so may increase your child's anxiety and cause more tics.



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- **Alternate** household tasks with free time to allow relaxation and prevent stress.
- **Encourage** your child to increase responsibilities at his or her own pace.

## Tips for Educators

Teachers can:

- **Provide more time** for the pupil to take written tests.
- **Provide alternatives if tics affect writing.** Allow the child to use a computer, word processor, or typewriter to create assignments rather than handwriting them.
- **Provide a quiet place** – position a seat where there is privacy and little distraction.
- **Allow for frequent rest periods** when needed.
- **Allow the child to leave the room** if he or she needs to let the tics occur in private.
- **Set a good example for accepting the pupil.** It is important for teachers to discourage teasing by responding quickly and firmly whenever it occurs.
- **Provide extra tutoring,** learning laboratories, or special classes if needed

## Living with Tourette's Syndrome

The **overall prognosis is positive.** Although there is no cure, many people don't need treatment when symptoms aren't troublesome. People with Tourette's Syndrome can **live a normal life span** and intelligence is not affected in any way. Only a rare minority of severe cases can inhibit or prevent individuals from holding a job or having a fulfilling social life.

Often discussions delve into the question, "Are there any advantages of having Tourette's Syndrome?" And, you may be surprised to hear that the answer to that question may be a resounding - Yes!

Discussions with adults who have Tourette's Syndrome reveal that not everyone wants treatment, especially if that means they may "lose" something else in the process. Some believe that there may even be advantages associated with the disorder.

**Some advantages associated with Tourette's Syndrome** include enhanced cognitive control in young people, as they may learn to 'camouflage' tics, mastering great mental control.

Children with Tourette's Syndrome in some cases had higher IQ scores than predicted by statistical models, and some may be unusually gifted!

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also

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sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable



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procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## **Related Natural Remedies:**

**BrightSpark**: Improve concentration, mental focus and calmness.

**BrightSpark** is a safe, non-addictive, natural remedy containing 100% homeopathic ingredients especially selected by our clinical psychologist. BrightSpark has been especially formulated for children and is a registered OTC homeopathic remedy to provide a balanced physical, cognitive and emotionally healthy climate to support healthy concentration and mental focus.

Many children fail to reach their potential despite the fact that they are **highly creative and intelligent** individuals with a wonderful sense of humor. Parents and teachers may be reluctant to suppress this spirit but recognize the need to help their children to improve concentration and conform to classroom standards of behavior. BrightSpark works by assisting the body in the **control of behaviors, emotions, and other obstacles** to effective concentration, thereby reducing distractibility, irritability and restlessness. It may be used to safely maintain health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system, without side effects.

BrightSpark will help keep your child alert and focused while at the same time encouraging balanced mood and a positive demeanor. It will help with consistency and staying on-track with tasks, thereby improving classroom performance and helping children to reach their potential naturally.

BrightSpark is also particularly helpful for those who struggle with anger outbursts

and inappropriate behavior that seems to resist all parental discipline.

This remedy is **registered with the FDA** according to the requirements governing homeopathic over-the-counter medication. All the proven ingredients in BrightSpark are listed with the HPUS (Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States) and the remedy is manufactured in a registered facility under pharmaceutical conditions.

In combination with a healthy lifestyle and diet, BrightSpark helps children to maintain **healthy consistent behavior, clear focus, and optimum performance** by providing a sound platform to support wellness and vitality. BrightSpark, along with other herbal supplements to support healthy brain functioning, can make all the difference without compromising health.

[Learn more about BrightSpark](#)

**PureCalm:** Aids nervous system in stress resistance for balanced moods and feelings of well being.

PureCalm is a 100% safe, non-addictive herbal remedy that has been specially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and children.

PureCalm can be used to safely maintain harmony, health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system, without harmful side effects and without sedatives. This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their supportive function in maintaining brain.

PureCalm can especially benefit those individuals needing support overcoming worry, managing stress and to promote inner calm related to certain situations. Natural stress relief products such as PureCalm can be used consistently, without side effects or compromising health.

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