

Tourette's syndrome (TS) is a neurological condition characterised by repetitive, involuntary movements (motor tics) and vocalisations (vocal tics). Both must be present to diagnose Tourette's syndrome.

Tics can range from simple movements like eye blinking or shoulder shrugging to more complex behaviours like jumping or repeating words or phrases. TS usually begins in childhood and often improves in adolescence or adulthood. However, some people with TS continue to experience tics throughout their lives.

The exact cause of TS is not fully understood, but it is believed to be related to abnormalities in the brain's chemical messengers, specifically dopamine and serotonin. Genetics also appears to play a role, as TS often runs in families.

There is no cure for TS, but treatment can help manage symptoms.

Behavioural therapies, such as cognitive-behavioural intervention for tics (CBIT) and habit reversal training (HRT), can help individuals learn to control their tics and reduce their frequency and severity. This is considered the first-line management for tic disorders.

Medications, such as antipsychotics and alpha-adrenergic agonists, can also be used to help control tics. Topiramate is emerging as a potential treatment option in children, but more research is required in adults. It is important to discuss treatment options with a specialist who has experience in managing TS.

In addition to treatment, regular follow-up care and self-care are important in managing TS. This may include regular appointments with a specialist, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and avoiding triggers that can worsen symptoms.

Individuals with TS should also take good care of their mental health, as anxiety and depression can often accompany the condition. As can obsessive-compulsive traits which are amenable to talking therapies and SSRI medications.

Finally, it is important for individuals with TS to have a supportive network of family and friends to help manage the challenges that can come with the condition. Further information and support is available from [Tourette's Action](#), a charity specialising in information and support for patients with tic disorders.