

TICS

What is Tic?

A tic is a sudden, repetitive movement or sound that can be difficult to control. They can occur in isolation or in clusters, and tend to occur multiple times per day. Tics that involve movements are called motor tics and those that are sounds are called vocal tics. Tics can be either simple (involving a single muscle group) or complex (involving more than one muscle group). Complex motor tics aren't as rapid as simple motor tics and can even look like the person is performing the tic on purpose.

Motor Tics

Nose wrinkling
Head twitching
Eye blinking
Lip biting
Facial grimacing
Repetitive touching
Arm flinging
Kicking

Vocal Tics

Coughing
Throat clearing
Grunting
Sniffing
Barking or hissing
Hiccups
Words
Coprolalia (curse words)

Diagnosis

Tics are a clinical diagnosis, which means your pediatrician will make this diagnosis after a thorough history and physical examination. While no lab tests are needed, sometimes your pediatrician will order tests to rule out other conditions that might have symptoms similar to tics.

Transient vs. Chronic Tics

It's perfectly normal to worry that a tic may never go away. Fortunately, that's not usually the case. Most tics are temporary and are known as transient tics. They tend to not last more than 3 months at a time. In rarer instances children have tics that persist for more than a year, it is known as chronic tic disorder. Tourette Syndrome is a type of tic disorder that occurs when you have more than 2 motor tics and at least a vocal tic, that has lasted for over one year.

Treatment

While you can't cure tics, you can take some easy steps to lessen their impact:

- Don't focus on it. If you know you have a tic, forget about it.
- Avoid stress-filled situations as much as you can.
- Get enough sleep. Being tired can make tics worse.
- Avoid caffeine such as coffee, tea, cola, and energy drinks.

In certain cases, tics are bad enough to interfere with someone's daily life and medication may be prescribed.

For more information on tics and Tourette syndrome see info from the University of Calgary:

[Tourette Syndrome and Tic Disorder | Cumming School of Medicine | University of Calgary \(ucalgary.ca\)](http://www.ucalgary.ca)