

# I DON'T MEAN TO SHOUT



Over 300,000 children and adults within the UK are living with Tourette syndrome. Tourette's is usually associated with people swearing or insulting others involuntarily as part of their tics, however, this only affects around 10% of those with the syndrome whilst the majority of those living with Tourette syndrome suffer a range of different tics.

This article will give you some more insight into Tourette syndrome to help you to understand it better for if and when you meet people who suffer from it or whether you already know someone.

## HOW DOES TOURETTE SYNDROME START?

The exact cause of Tourette syndrome isn't currently known but family history may increase chances as well as gender as males are 3 or 4 times more likely to develop Tourette syndrome. However, it usually starts during childhood usually between the ages of 2 and 14 but because of this, tics and other symptoms of Tourette syndrome can improve over the years or sometimes stop completely.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Many people who aren't in the know, think that tics only come in the form of saying random words or swearing but this only affects a small proportion of Tourette's syndrome sufferers. Tics can come in many forms, mainly in unwanted movements or unwanted sounds that cannot be easily controlled.

Tics can be verbal or physical. Physical tics can range from simple tics like eye blinking or nose twitching to complex tics like stepping in a certain pattern or hopping. Vocal tics can be as unsuspecting as throat clearing or grunting ranging to using vulgar language. These tics are also likely to worsen if the individual is stressed, tired, excited or anxious and can even happen during sleep.

## CAN TICS BE CONTROLLED?

The nature of a tic is that it is of course an involuntary thing that people suffering from Tourette's syndrome are

unable to control. Some find they can control tics for a short period of time, others can't.

## IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR TOURETTE SYNDROME?

There is currently no cure for Tourette syndrome but there are treatments to help individuals manage their tics. Many individuals live with their tics from day to day however, medication and behavioural treatments are available for those who suffer from tics that cause pain or injury, disrupt school, work, their social life or cause stress from day to day.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

Although individuals who suffer with Tourette syndrome often lead healthy and active lives, some may also suffer from mood and behavioural problems such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Living with the syndrome can often involve social challenges that can harm an individual's self-image and self-esteem leading to potential mental health issues such as depression or anxiety as well as the risk of bullying because of their tics.

## MORE INFORMATION

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

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