
Treating Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

If you have OCD, treatment and your own efforts can offer hope for a healthier, happier life. Talk with your healthcare provider. Or contact a mental health professional or mental health clinic. If you can't afford treatment, don't give up. There are programs that may help pay for your medicines and care.

To learn more

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness at www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) or 800-950-NAMI (800-950-6264)
- [National Mental Health Association at www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org) or 800-969-6642
- [International OCD Foundation at www.iocdf.org](http://www.iocdf.org) or 617-973-5801
- [National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) or 866-615-6464

Cognitive-behavioral therapy

This type of therapy can help you change unwanted thought patterns. You'll also learn to control compulsive actions. Working with your therapist, you'll confront your unwanted thoughts and fears, one step at a time. For most people with OCD, cognitive-behavioral therapy is the first treatment choice.

Family therapy

OCD may also affect your loved ones. They may be impatient, confused, or angered by your symptoms. Often, they may want to help but don't know what to do. A family therapist can help them learn more about OCD. They may also find comfort in an OCD support group.

Medicine

Medicines that treat depression may also help control the symptoms of OCD. These medicines don't cure the disorder, but they can provide some relief. It may take at least 3 weeks for them to work. Once you feel better, don't stop taking them on your own or increase or decrease the dose. If you do, your symptoms will likely come back, or you could have serious withdrawal symptoms or side effects. Also keep in mind that, no matter the dose, most medicines can have side effects. If you're troubled by side effects, tell the healthcare provider who prescribed the medicine. They may change the dose or type of medicine to help relieve the side effect symptoms. Never increase or decrease your dose unless you talk with your provider.