



Kleptomania



Overview

This is a disorder that involves your self control. With it, you have an irresistible urge to steal things. You may steal things you don't need, or things you can't use. You may steal things that aren't worth much, or things you could easily afford to buy. This can cause serious problems in your life.

Causes

We don't understand the cause of kleptomania. It may be linked to an imbalance in the chemicals in your brain that regulate feelings of pleasure and reward. It may be linked to the part of your brain that controls your urges. It is more common in women. Your risk is higher if you have a close relative with this disorder. Your risk is also higher if you have certain other mental disorders, or if your brain has been injured.

Symptoms

If you have this disorder, you have overwhelming urges to steal things you don't need. You're not stealing for profit or because you can't afford something, you steal because you can't resist the urge. You feel tense and aroused before you steal, and relieved and gratified after the theft. Later, you may feel guilty, ashamed and afraid.

Treatment

Kleptomania is treated with talk therapy techniques that help you learn to control your urges to steal. Some people benefit from medication. Support groups and continued counseling can help, too. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

Actor portrayals in photos

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