

## Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Self-Test

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a frequently misunderstood condition where you may perform repeated rituals, called compulsions such as hand-washing, counting, hoarding, et). to help cope with unwanted thoughts (obsessions) or anxieties. OCD is thought to affect up to 2% of the U.S. population and often begins in childhood or early adolescence. Here are a few questions that may help determine if you or someone you know could use help to cope with OCD behaviors.

### 1. Have you been bothered by unpleasant thoughts or images that frequently enter your mind about:

- germs or dirt
- getting an illness
- images of death
- keeping things in perfect order or arranged exactly
- personally unacceptable sexual or other thoughts

### 2. Do you worry a lot about terrible things happening such as:

- fire, burglary or flooding of your house
- accidentally hitting someone with your car or letting it roll downhill
- spreading an illness
- losing something valuable
- harm coming to someone because you weren't careful enough

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## Where to get help for OCD

**Here are some organizations that can give you information and help you find treatment if you or someone you love is dealing with obsessive-compulsive disorder.**

### **American Counseling Association**

Referral information about counselors in your area.  
800-326-2642 [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)

### **Anxiety Disorders Association of America**

Call to get a list of mental health professionals in your area who treat anxiety disorders as well as a list of self-help groups in your area.  
301-231-9350 (not toll-free) [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)

### **Obsessive Compulsive Foundation**

Visit website for help finding a therapist in your area who specializes in treatment of OCD, self-help groups, and other resources to help you understand and find treatment for OCD.  
617-973-5801 (not toll-free) [www.ocfoundation.org](http://www.ocfoundation.org)

### **Recovery, Inc.**

A member-run self-help group – not affiliated with any religion, organization or business – that holds local support meetings for people coping with mental health issues.  
312-337-5661 (not toll-free) [www.recovery-inc.org](http://www.recovery-inc.org)

### **National Library of Medicine**

#### **Medline Plus (U.S. government health website)**

Get information online about signs & symptoms, treatments, diagnosis in adults and children and clinic trials regarding OCD and other mental health issues.  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html) (link continued below)  
[obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html)

**3. Have you worried about acting on an unwanted and senseless urge or impulse like:**

- physically harming a loved one
- physically harming yourself
- inappropriate physical contact
- harming someone intentionally

**4. Have you felt driven to do certain things over and over such as:**

- excessive hand-washing or grooming
- checking light switches, stoves, emergency brake, etc.

**5. Do you find yourself arranging or counting certain items like:**

- making sure your cans face the same direction
- arranging books in alphabetical order
- making sure your towels have the same number in each pile

**6. Do you keep (hoard) things you don't need or worry about throwing something out you might need later?**

**7. Do you find yourself repeating actions a certain number of times or until you feel better about it like**

- going through a door
- turning an appliance on or off
- re-lighting a cigarette

**8. Do you find yourself going out of your way to avoid colors, numbers or names because they are associated with or signify bad things or unwanted thoughts (red=blood, 13 is unlucky, etc.)?**

## EVALUATING YOUR SELF-TEST ANSWERS

If you answered "YES" to 2 or more of these questions, you may be having obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors that are interfering with your ability to live your happiest, healthiest life.

This test is NOT a diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder – that determination can only be made by a qualified mental health professional. Many of the thoughts and behaviors in these questions happen to many people throughout their lives and do not necessarily indicate a mental health condition.

But if you find these thoughts interfering with your life or feel uncomfortable about the effect they are having on your happiness or mental well-being, you should talk to your doctor or a mental health professional to see if there are treatments that might help you.

There is growing research that many obsessive-compulsive symptoms may be the result of differences in how your brain works. In tests, those with OCD tendencies have patterns of brain activity that differ from people without these tendencies.

Many new treatments including medication, behavioral therapy and help coping with events and conditions that might trigger compulsive behavior have been very effective.

Also keep in mind that OCD is sometimes triggered by other physical conditions or emotional events such as eating disorders, depression, substance abuse, etc.

As with many mental conditions, OCD is often misunderstood and people are embarrassed to admit they may have symptoms or need help. If you or someone you care about experiences these symptoms remember that mental conditions are no more someone's "fault" than having a physical condition like diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma and needs the same diagnosis, care and treatment as those conditions.