

Managing Tics

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Neurology

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Agenda

- What are tics?
- How are tics and Tourette syndrome diagnosed?
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - When should tics be treated?
 - What first-line medications should be used to treat tics?
 - Is treatment of ADHD with stimulant medications recommended in patients with tics?
 - What is the prognosis of tic disorders?





What are tics and how do we diagnose tic disorders?



What are tics?

- Tics are repetitive, patterned, and involuntary movements or sounds that can occur starting in early childhood
 - Common motor tics: eye blinking, eye rolling, and twitches or jerks of the head or shoulders
 - Common vocal tics: sniffing, throat clearing, humming and grunting
- Tics can be somewhat suppressible, but they can be more frequent with fatigue, stress, and illness
- Tic disorders may be associated with other problems such as anxiety, ADHD, OCD, or learning problems





How do we diagnose tic disorders and Tourette syndrome?



How do we diagnose tic disorders and Tourette syndrome?

Provisional Tic Disorder

- Tics occurring on and off for less than one year are referred to as **transient tics** or **provisional tic disorder**

Chronic Tic Disorder

- Tics that have been occurring on and off for greater than one year are classified as **chronic tic disorders**
 - Chronic motor tic disorder
 - Chronic vocal tic disorder
- **Tourette syndrome** is a combination of at least two motor tics and at least one vocal tics





When should tics be treated?

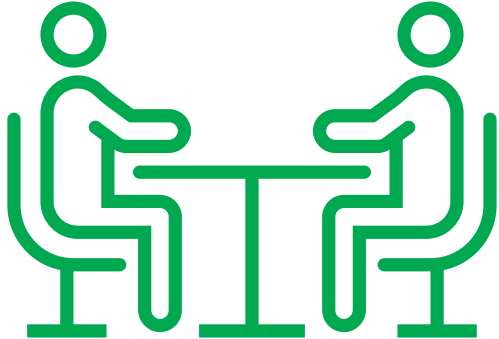


When should tics be treated?

- Most tics are transient, not harmful, and **do not require treatment**
- It is recommended to start medication when:
 - Tics are causing the patient pain
 - Negatively impacting the patient's quality of life
- Medication should be considered when the potential benefit of reducing tics outweighs the risk of potential side effects.
 - Medications do not usually suppress tics completely, but they can help **reduce the frequency and severity** of tics
- Note that there is **no cure for tics**



When should tics be treated?



- Behavioral therapies such as **Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT)** or **Habit Reversal Therapy** can be helpful for children who are old enough to describe their tic urges (usually **age 8 and older**)



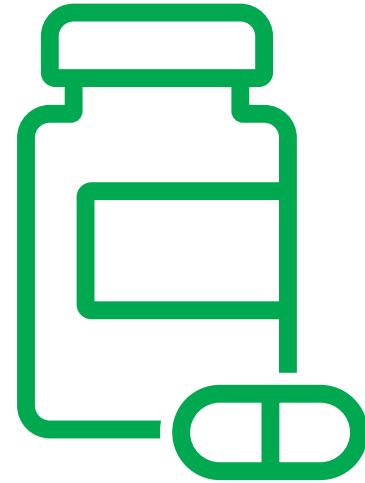


What first-line medications should be used to treat tics?



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- Alpha agonists (clonidine or guanfacine) are recommended as first-line medications for tics
 - They may also provide some benefit for symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention, and aggression
 - These medications may be titrated slowly or quickly depending on severity of symptoms
 - The final daily dose needed varies by patient



What first-line medications should be used to treat tics?

- The most common side effect is sedation. Less common side effects include:
 - Mood/personality changes (depression)
 - Headaches
 - Light-headedness
 - Stomach upset
 - Nightmares
- If the patient is taking other medicines that cause sleepiness, lightheadedness/dizziness, or low blood pressure as a side effect, adding clonidine or guanfacine may make these symptoms **worse**.





Is treatment of ADHD with stimulant medications recommended in patients with tics?



Is treatment of ADHD with stimulant medications recommended in patients with tics?

- Tic disorders are associated with ADHD
- The presence of tics should not prevent a patient from being treated for ADHD if needed
- Stimulant medications can sometimes **increase** the frequency of tics
 - If this occurs and the tics are bothersome, lowering the dose or switching medications sometimes helps
- In some children, treating ADHD results in improvement of tics as improving ADHD symptoms can relieve stress
- Non-stimulant medications for ADHD can also be considered

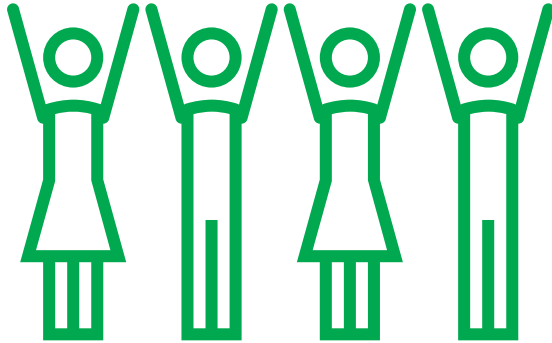




What is the prognosis of tic disorders?



What is the prognosis of tic disorders?



- In general, the **prognosis of tic disorders is good**
- Tics tend to peak between age 9 and age 14
- After 14 years, most patient's tic less often than they did as a child, whether they were treated with medication or not.



THANK YOU!

For additional information, please visit our web page:

<https://www.choa.org/medical-professionals/referrals-and-transfers/directory-of-services/neurosciences-resources>

For specific questions regarding your patient, you may also call 404-785-DOCS (3627) and ask to speak with the on-call neurologist.

