

## Types of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

### What are different types of OCD?

All forms of OCD are similar in that a trigger occurs, causing intrusive thoughts, which then cause distress and anxiety and ultimately lead to compulsive behavior. Both OCD obsessions and compulsions can have either physical or emotional symptoms.

### Cleaning/contamination OCD

People who have a cleaning or contamination OCD tend to focus on fear or intense feelings of discomfort that results from contamination or uncleanliness. Washing excessively is normal and is done in an attempt to relieve the feelings of distress. A good example of contamination OCD is touching a light switch and convincing yourself that it was dirty and that you're now contaminated. You may fear that you'll contaminate others which may lead to the repetitive behavior of frequently washing your hands to try and cleanse yourself.

### Order/symmetry or counting compulsions OCD

Order and symmetry and counting compulsions OCD creates a very intense urge to arrange and rearrange things until they're just right — or at least exactly how you think they should be. In some cases, this compulsive behavior could look like a need to constantly rearrange the socks in your drawer to be organized by color or by type. This subtype might also make you count or say phrases or words over and over again until you feel something is done perfectly. Sometimes the need to order, count, or repeat can be an attempt to stave off danger or bad luck. You may feel like if you get something perfectly arranged, or if you say a certain phrase so many times, perhaps someone won't die, or they won't leave you.

### Harm OCD Harm

OCD involves extreme feelings or worry that you'll harm yourself or others. In order to relieve these unwanted thoughts, you might use what's known as checking rituals. An example of harm OCD is you may believe that you accidentally hit someone with your car. You can feel so strongly about this that

you'll be compelled to drive back to the place where you thought the accident occurred to prove to yourself nothing happened. You'll likely do this repeatedly in an attempt to be absolutely sure.

### **Hoarding OCD**

Hoarding OCD is now actually recognized as its own diagnosis in the DSM-5. When someone hoards, they collect items that typically don't have much value. Magazines, notes, clothing, games, containers — a hoarder may keep so many of these items, their home becomes virtually unlivable as it's so filled with clutter. An obsessive thought surrounding not having something you might one day need is common with hoarding. This OCD subtype has a higher rate of co-existing depression and anxiety than others. Note that hoarding OCD is a separate condition from compulsive hoarding and can occur on its own without a distinct OCD diagnosis.