

TOURETTE SYNDROME AND DEPRESSION – HOW ARE THEY LINKED?

HAVING TOURETTE SYNDROME MEANS YOU MAY BE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION. HOWEVER, THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS DEPRESSION CAN BE MANAGED AND TREATED.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is when someone experiences low mood for prolonged periods, often in combination with reduced enjoyment in activities. Evidence tell us depression may be more common in people with Tourette syndrome (TS). This can change how someone may feel about themselves and interfere with many aspects of their life.

There is no single cause of depression, it can happen to anyone for a variety of reasons. Feeling down or sad occasionally, or once something difficult has happened, is something everyone can experience. However, when these feelings persist for a long time, it could be a sign of depression.

DID YOU KNOW?

Depression can also cause physical symptoms such as aches and pains, slow movement, weight loss/gain from decreased/increased appetite, difficulty getting to sleep or sleeping, or sleeping too much.

Symptoms

Depression can feel different for different people, but the common symptoms include:

- Feeling down or low in mood
- Losing interest in things they would usually enjoy
- Feel low in energy or tired all the time
- Feeling upset or tearful
- Feeling more Irritable
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Negative feelings about themselves or the future
- Feeling detached from life and other people
- Feelings of emptiness or feeling numb
- Having new problems concentrating

These symptoms can have an impact on how a person may act in their day-to-day life affecting their work and relationships with others. Changes in someone's behaviour may be a sign that they are depressed. They may isolate themselves, withdraw from friends and family or stop doing things they used to do.



DEPRESSION AND TOURETTE SYNDROME

Depression may occur in people with TS for a few different reasons:

- The psychological impact of tics on everyday life may lead to low self-esteem, embarrassment and social isolation, which may play a role in the development of depression
- Some people with TS may feel stigmatised (disapproved of) because of their tics and this can worsen the symptoms of depression
- Tics can also have a physical impact; they can cause pain/discomfort, which can affect mood
- The imbalance in neurotransmitters (chemical messengers in the brain) that is thought to cause involuntary tics may also cause low mood

WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR DEPRESSION?

If you think that you or your child may be experiencing depression, the first step you can take is to contact your GP. They can refer you to a specialist for further assessment and treatment if necessary.

There are many ways to treat depression, with the main treatments being talking therapies and medication. There are different types of talking therapy, such as Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), Interpersonal therapy (IPT), Behavioural activation and Psychodynamic psychotherapy. The type of talking therapy prescribed can vary depending on the type and severity of depression.

Alongside a treatment plan, self-care can also be a good way to help with depression. This can include regular exercise, a healthy diet, sleeping well and looking after your hygiene. Ensuring that you have social contact with other people can also be helpful, such as talking with friends and family.

Although self-care can be helpful in improving symptoms, it is important to speak to your GP if you think you are experiencing depression.



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

Mind

A national charity offering advice and support to those experiencing a mental health issue:

www.mind.org.uk

For Support Call: 0300 102 1234

For Information Call: 0300 123 3393

NHS Choices

The official website for the National Health Service in England:

www.nhs.uk



REFERENCES

Abbasi P, Tanhaie S, Kazeminia M. *Prevalence of depression and anxiety in patients with Tourette syndrome; 1997 to 2022: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. Ital J Pediatr. 2023. 49(1):160.

Mind. *Depression Symptoms*. Accessed September 2025. Available at www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/symptoms

Małek A, Golińska P. *Depression in Tourette Syndrome*. Psychiatr Pol. 2020. 54(1): p.69–82.

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. *Tourette Syndrome and Depression*. Accessed September 2025. Available at www.gosh.nhs.uk/wards-and-departments/departments/clinical-specialties/department-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-dcamh/the-tic-service/tourette-syndrome-and-depression

NHS. *Treatment – Depression in adults*. Accessed September 2025. Available at www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/depression-in-adults/treatment

TOURETTES ACTION

The Meads Business Centre
19 Kingsmead
Farnborough, Hampshire
GU14 7SR

Registered charity number: 1003317

W // www.tourettes-action.org.uk
E // help@tourettes-action.org.uk

