OCD (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/>)

**Summary:**

**Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) affects people differently, but usually causes a particular pattern of thoughts and behaviours.**

This pattern has 4 main steps:

1. Obsession – where an unwanted, intrusive and often distressing thought, image or urge repeatedly enters your mind.
2. Anxiety – the obsession provokes a feeling of intense anxiety or distress.
3. Compulsion – repetitive behaviours or mental acts that you feel driven to perform as a result of the anxiety and distress caused by the obsession.
4. Temporary relief – the compulsive behaviour temporarily relieves the anxiety, but the obsession and anxiety soon returns, causing the cycle to begin again.

It's possible to just have obsessive thoughts or just have compulsions, but most people with OCD will experience both.

**Symptoms:**

If you have OCD, you'll usually experience frequent obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

* An obsession is an unwanted and unpleasant thought, image or urge that repeatedly enters your mind, causing feelings of anxiety, disgust or unease.
* A compulsion is a repetitive behaviour or mental act that you feel you need to carry out to try to temporarily relieve the unpleasant feelings brought on by the obsessive thought.

For example, someone with an obsessive fear of their house being burgled may feel they need to check all the windows and doors are locked several times before they can leave the house.

**Strategies:**

OCD does not get better on its own – advise seeking help from a GP

* **Seating arrangement:** If the school has noisy hallways, you might not want to have a child with OCD sit by the door. You might have her sit in the front, where she’s less able to hear the noise and can stay more focused on her work. On the other hand, a child who has very observable symptoms, and doesn’t want other kids to see her fidgeting with her hands, rocking or getting up a lot, might be better off closer to the door, toward the back of the room.
* **Extended time for tests and papers:** If writing is a problem for a child who needs to find the perfect way to say something, he’s going to need more time to finish those essay questions or papers.
* **Laptops for writing:** If writing and rewriting/erasing is really problematic for a child, consider letting her use a laptop for taking notes, and having all assignments be typed instead of handwritten.
* **Private testing rooms:** Research is quite clear that kids with OCD do better, are less overwhelmed and are more in control of their thoughts and their reactions if they’re in a quiet place away from the other kids.
* **Skip reading out loud:** Kids who feel they need to read perfectly may have to go back and reread sentences or whole paragraphs over and over to make sure they’ve got them right. So reading becomes a very laborious task, and reading in front of the class can become a nightmare. So if we know doing this is a problem for children, we can spare them.
* **Books on tape:** If kids get so hung up reading that it takes forever, listening to the books can be a solution.
* **Break homework into chunks:** If looking at a whole page of math makes kids feel overwhelmed and anxious — think of the potential for mistakes! — the problems can be broken up over four pages. It helps kids stay focused on doing the problems instead of worrying.