

MEMO FROM THE M.D.:

CHILD OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Occurring in a mere two percent of children, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a serious and demanding illness that is characterized by obsessions and compulsions which are a need to perform repetitive acts in order to diminish some impending distress. OCD in children is usually onset between the ages of 7 and 12. Daily life is difficult for children and teens with the illness because it affects their social life and self-esteem, and often takes up a great amount of time, making it difficult to finish chores and homework.

Some of the most common obsessions and compulsions in children and teens with OCD are:

Obsessions

- Fear of germs and contamination
- Need for symmetry and balance
- Lucky or unlucky numbers
- Fear of harm coming to oneself or others

Compulsions

- Excessive grooming, hand washing, cleaning
- Counting rituals
- Ordering and arranging objects



Recognizing signs and symptoms in your child can sometimes be hard because some children have become proficient at hiding these behaviors. Rituals performed at school can often be considered a phase the child is going through and be overlooked by parents. It is important for parents to understand the practices of OCD in order to take the proper steps in treating the illness.

The most effective treatments for children and teens with OCD are a combination of psychotherapy and medications. Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy (CBT) first changes a child's behavior which helps them control thoughts and feelings. Devereux Outpatient Services can offer you and your family an experienced and caring medical and clinical staff with access to highly specialized services which include psychiatric evaluations, medication management, individual therapy and family/relationship therapy. If you would like to make a referral or schedule an appointment, please call Devereux Outpatient Services at 281.332.8608.



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If you have any topics or questions that you would like Dr. Berno to address in the next newsletter, please e-mail inquiries to the Office of Development at igraham@devereux.org.