



## 12 How many people in Germany suffer from Tourette syndrome?

For this, only vague estimates exist. The number of affected people lies in the range of about 0.4%-0.7% of the population.

## 13 Is Tourette syndrome a "new" illness?

No. Tourette syndrome was first described in 1825 and was named after the French neurologist Georges Gilles de la Tourette in 1885.

## 14 Are there any famous people who have or have had Tourette syndrome?

There is no doubt that the author Samuel Johnson as well as the American basketball player Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf were afflicted. There are on going discussions as to whether such figures as Claudius, Napoleon, Molière, Peter the Great and Mozart also had Tourette syndrome, based on historical documents.

## 15 How is Tourette syndrome diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made clinically, that is, determined on the basis on medical history and examinations conducted by a doctor familiar with the Tourette syndrome.

## Membership application

By becoming a member, you will be actively supporting our work. As a member of the Tourette Society of Germany e.V., (TGD) you will receive regular information updates about the Tourette syndrome in two letters each year and a membership magazine provided free of charge. In a few days, you will receive a small welcome package with information materials.

Family name, given name, date of birth

Street, number

Postcode, town/city

My membership fee is:

- 30,- € (standard)
- 15,- € (pupils, students, pensioners and recipients of social welfare benefits; please provide documentary evidence)

Account holder

IBAN

BIC

The membership fee will be debited annually on 1 March, using a SEPA account debit authorisation. In the next few days, you will receive a SEPA debit authorisation to be filled out and the authorisation number with the TGD creditor ID by post. Please send the completed membership application to our office.

[www.tourette-gesellschaft.de](http://www.tourette-gesellschaft.de) · [info@tourette-gesellschaft.de](mailto:info@tourette-gesellschaft.de)



## Tourette Syndrom

**Brief Information from the  
Tourette Society  
of Germany e.V. (TGD)**



### 1 What is Tourette syndrome?

Tourette syndrome is a complex neurological-psychiatric disorder. The core symptoms consist of constantly changing motor and vocal tics of strongly fluctuating intensity. The onset always takes place in childhood or youth. The progression of the disorder is chronic.

### 2 What are tics?

Motor tics are commonly understood as involuntary twitching that in principle may occur anywhere in the body, but are most commonly localised in the face and on the head (e.g. eyeblinking, grimacing facial movements and jerking of the head). Vocal tics are involuntarily uttered noises, sounds or words (e.g. throatclearing, coughing or hums and hahs).

### 3 Can other symptoms accompany tics in the case of Tourette syndrome?

Yes. Many of the people affected also suffer from behavioural disorders. Among the common symptoms in childhood are hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder and impulse control disorders. Other symptoms may include obsessive-compulsive disorders, anxiety, depression or autoaggression. Tourette syndrome is not associated with any impairment of intellectual capabilities.

### 4 Do all Tourette patients have the same symptoms?

No. It is highly unlikely that there are two persons anywhere in the world who suffer from Tourette syndrome and have completely identical symptoms.

### 5 Can Tourette syndrome patients suppress their symptoms?

Some but not all affected by the condition are able to suppress their tics deliberately for a more or less short time period. In most cases, this will be experienced as exhausting and uncomfortable. A phase of strengthened tics will often follow.

### 6 What is coprolalia?

Some people with Tourette's will utter objectionable phrases or obscene words involuntarily. This symptom is referred to as coprolalia. Not uncommonly, this leads to judgements and impairment of social interactions, particularly when personal insult is erroneously inferred.

#### Specialist consultation:

Prof Dr Kirsten Müller-Vahl  
Hanover, Medical School

### 7 How does Tourette syndrome progress?

The progression of this disorder is chronic. Nevertheless, the frequency and intensity of tics may suddenly decrease among adults. A further characteristic is a marked fluctuation in symptoms with tics that vary considerably in their nature.

### 8 What causes Tourette syndrome?

Tourette syndrome is an organic disorder of the brain.

### 9 Is Tourette syndrome hereditary?

Yes. However, the underlying hereditary changes or precise heredity have not yet been discovered.

### 10 Can the Tourette syndrome be healed?

No. At present, there is no known treatment that promises a cure.

### 11 Is there any possibility for treatment?

Yes. Various medications are available for the treatment of tics and other possible symptoms of Tourette syndrome. Due to their possible side effects, treatment must always be undertaken in individual consultation with the attending physician.