

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Facts for Families

What are the symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder?

It is common for children to be defiant toward adults sometimes. For example, they may argue, refuse to do what they are told, or talk back. However, if your child has negative, hostile and defiant behavior that lasts more than 6 months and is worse than behavior normally seen in children of the same age, your child may have Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

The signs and symptoms include frequent:

- Loss of temper
- Arguing with adults
- Refusing to do what adults ask or to follow rules
- Annoying other people on purpose
- Blaming others for their own mistakes
- Being touchy or easily annoyed by others
- Anger and resentment
- Spitefulness or vindictiveness (being unkind or mean)

How common is ODD?

ODD is a fairly common problem in children and teens. Boys are much more likely to have ODD than girls. It often occurs with other disorders, such as ADHD.

What causes ODD?

ODD is likely to develop from a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors, including:

- The disposition or temperament of your child
- Genetic factors
- Difficulty processing thoughts and feelings
- Lax, inconsistent or overly harsh parenting
- Abuse, neglect or exposure to trauma

What is the impact of ODD?

ODD can cause or contribute to social, academic and family problems. It is likely that aspects or symptoms of ODD will improve over time for most children, but it does put them at a greater risk for more serious disorders, such as more serious conduct problems, and substance use, as well as antisocial behavior as older adolescents or adults. Due to the long-term consequences of ODD, it should be taken seriously.

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To Learn More

- Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine: Support and Crisis Services
206-987-2146, option 4
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



How is ODD treated?

Because ODD often occurs along with other disorders such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity disorder, learning problems, conduct disorders, and anxiety and mood disorders, it is important to have a comprehensive thorough evaluation and treatment plan for your child.

There are two types of therapy for children with ODD:

- **Behavioral Interventions** – This includes training for parents and other caregivers to closely monitor children’s behavior, as well as situations that make behaviors better or worse. Caregivers will learn specific ways to reward appropriate behavior and respond to inappropriate behavior. We have several Parent Behavioral Management groups in our outpatient clinic, and typically recommend the *Superparenting* group.
- **Individual family approach** – Some families may require a more individualized approach, such as family therapy or wrap around services for their child. Wraparound with Intensive Services, or WISe* is a program in Washington state for Medicaid-eligible children, youth and their families with intensive mental health care needs. This is offered in the community setting for those who would need a team approach to care.

It is often helpful to work with your child’s school to address any related learning difficulties and peer problems.

Is treatment helpful?

About 2 out of 3 children who are treated for ODD will show major improvements. Learning how to use effective discipline strategies has been shown to greatly reduce behavior problems in children. Medicines can be considered for treating your child’s ODD-related problems, after or along with behavioral treatment, especially if they also have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or other disorders for which evidence-based medication treatments are indicated.

*For more information on WISe program for Medicaid eligible children and youth:

hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/wraparound-intensive-services-wise

Seattle Children’s offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201. This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children’s. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.

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