**Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

**What is Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)?**

Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is a persistent behavioral pattern of angry or irritable mood; argumentative, defiant behavior towards authority figures; and vindictiveness. In some children with ODD, these behaviors are only in evidence in one setting—usually at home. In more severe cases they occur in multiple settings. For a diagnosis of ODD, the frequency and intensity of these behaviors must be outside the typical range for a child’s developmental level, gender and culture.

**What are some symptoms of ODD?**

Sometimes it's difficult to recognize the difference between a strong-willed or emotional child and one with oppositional defiant disorder. It's normal to exhibit oppositional behavior at certain stages of a child's development.

Signs of ODD generally begin during preschool years. Sometimes ODD may develop later, but almost always before the early teen years. These behaviors cause significant impairment with family, social activities, school and work.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association, lists criteria for diagnosing ODD. The DSM-5 criteria include emotional and behavioral symptoms that last at least six months.

***Angry and irritable mood:***

Often and easily loses temper

Is frequently touchy and easily annoyed by others

Is often angry and resentful

Argumentative and defiant behavior:

Often argues with adults or people in authority

Often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules

Often deliberately annoys or upsets people

Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior

***Vindictiveness:***

Is often spiteful or vindictive

Has shown spiteful or vindictive behavior at least twice in the past six months

***ODD can vary in severity:***

Mild. Symptoms occur only in one setting, such as only at home, school, work or with peers.

Moderate. Some symptoms occur in at least two settings.

Severe. Some symptoms occur in three or more settings.

**What are the causes of ODD?**

There's no known clear cause of oppositional defiant disorder. Contributing causes may be a combination of inherited and environmental factors, including:

Genetics:  a child's natural disposition or temperament and possibly neurobiological differences in the way nerves and the brain function

Environment:  problems with parenting that may involve a lack of supervision, inconsistent or harsh discipline, or abuse or neglect

**What are possible risk factors for ODD?**

Oppositional defiant disorder is a complex problem. Possible risk factors for ODD include:

Temperament — a child who has a temperament that includes difficulty regulating emotions, such as being highly emotionally reactive to situations or having trouble tolerating frustration

Parenting issues — a child who experiences abuse or neglect, harsh or inconsistent discipline, or a lack of parental supervision

Other family issues — a child who lives with parent or family discord or has a parent with a mental health or substance use disorder

Environment — oppositional and defiant behaviors can be strengthened and reinforced through attention from peers and inconsistent discipline from other authority figures, such as teachers.

**What are some complications with ODD?**

Children and teenagers with oppositional defiant disorder may have trouble at home with parents and siblings, in school with teachers, and at work with supervisors and other authority figures. Children with ODD may struggle to make and keep friends and relationships.

ODD may lead to problems such as:

Poor school and work performance

Antisocial behavior

Impulse control problems

Substance use disorder

Suicide

Many children and teens with ODD also have other mental health disorders, such as:

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Conduct disorder

Depression

Anxiety

Learning and communication disorders

Treating these other mental health disorders may help improve ODD symptoms. And it may be difficult to treat ODD if these other disorders are not evaluated and treated appropriately.

**How can you prevent ODD?**

There's no guaranteed way to prevent oppositional defiant disorder. However, positive parenting and early treatment can help improve behavior and prevent the situation from getting worse. The earlier that ODD can be managed, the better.

Treatment can help restore your child's self-esteem and rebuild a positive relationship between you and your child. Your child's relationships with other important adults in his or her life — such as teachers and care providers — also will benefit from early treatment.

**Resources**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/oppositional-defiant-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20375831>

<https://childmind.org/article/what-is-odd-oppositional-defiant-disorder/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oppositional_defiant_disorder>

<https://www.valleybehavioral.com/disorders/odd/signs-symptoms-causes/>

<https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Children_With_Oppositional_Defiant_Disorder_72.aspx>