

## Tics in toddlers

Transient tics such as eyeblinks, grimacing or throat noises are a normal developmental phase that can be seen in many toddlers. When tics become chronic however, they can increase in severity until puberty and be harder to deal with, especially when they are accompanied by behavioral problems such as hyperactivity, compulsions, oppositional behavior or tantrums. Chronic tic disorders including Tourette syndrome often start between 5 and 8 years, but when they start before age 4, they may interfere with important phases in brain development. We compared children with tic disorders (8-15 years old) who showed tics before age 4 or after age 6 and found that those with an early onset of tics showed a higher frequency of stuttering and oppositional behavior, both symptoms that often appear at an early age. This observation suggests that early brain maturation in systems controlling speech and emotion is affected by the presence of a tic disorder in toddlers. We recommend paying more attention to tics that last several months or that have a high frequency in toddlers to increase early interventions, education, and stress reduction.

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## Publication

[Clinical features associated with an early onset in chronic tic disorders.](#)

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