

# Comprehensive Treatment for Tardive Dyskinesia

**Involuntary facial expressions. Difficulty eating, speaking and swallowing. Embarrassment.** These are common experiences of people who live with a disorder of the nervous system called tardive dyskinesia.



## About Tardive Dyskinesia

Tardive dyskinesia is a condition that causes involuntary, repetitive movements — most commonly in the face, but often in the limbs, torso, and other parts of the body. The primary reason someone develops tardive dyskinesia is prolonged use of prescription medications, most often antipsychotics. Other factors that heighten a person's risk include genetic predisposition, age, sex and pre-existing medical conditions.

Tardive dyskinesia can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life. The involuntary, repetitive movements that characterize the condition can make everyday activities difficult. The condition can also affect a person's social and emotional wellbeing due to stigma and feelings of isolation.

## Treatment

Though tardive dyskinesia cannot be cured, the condition can still be managed. Innovative treatments can help manage involuntary movement symptoms.

Pharmacologic treatment for tardive dyskinesia usually entails prescription medications like valbenazine and deutetrabenazine. Health care providers may also reduce the dose of antipsychotic medication if appropriate.

Non-pharmacologic treatments may include physical and occupational therapy, as well as assistive devices. Assistive devices aim to help tardive dyskinesia patients handle daily tasks more easily. They include things like modified writing and computer tools, as well as adapted eating utensils.

### EXISTING TREATMENTS



Medications



Physical Therapies



Assistive Devices

## Need for Innovation

Meanwhile, studies are exploring novel ways to treat tardive dyskinesia. One promising development is deep brain stimulation. One study has shown that deep brain stimulation can reduce the frequency of tardive dyskinesia symptoms by 40% in six months.

## Need for Access

Access to treatment is key for those living with tardive dyskinesia. Policy reforms are needed to ensure access to appropriate care. Barriers like prior authorization and step therapy harm people with tardive dyskinesia far too often.

Prior authorization may force people to wait to receive their prescribed treatment, leaving them to deal with their symptoms or pay out-of-pocket costs that can be prohibitively high. Step therapy may force people with tardive dyskinesia to use medications that are less effective, aren't FDA-approved, or have undesirable side effects, prolonging their distress.

Policymakers can address these barriers, so people with tardive dyskinesia can access treatments more easily.



**Tardive dyskinesia makes life difficult, frustrating and embarrassing.** People living with the condition need access to the treatments that work best for them.



**Alliance for Patient Access**

The Alliance for Patient Access is a national network of policy-minded health care providers advocating for patient-centered care.

[AllianceforPatientAccess.org](http://AllianceforPatientAccess.org)



The Movement Disorders Policy Coalition brings together advocacy groups, health care providers, patients and other stakeholders to inform policy impacting patient-centered care for people living with movement disorders.

[MovementDisordersPolicy.org](http://MovementDisordersPolicy.org)

