

Anxiety Disorders



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Everyone experiences anxiety. However, when feelings of fear and distress are overwhelming and stop us from doing everyday things, an anxiety disorder may be the cause. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States.

What are the symptoms?

Anxiety changes how a person lives day-to-day. Just like with any mental illness, people with anxiety disorders may experience symptoms differently. Some of the symptoms of anxiety are:

- Feelings of worry
- Difficulties sitting still
- Having a bad temper or getting upset easily
- Worrying about the worst and always looking for signs of danger
- Pounding or racing heart and having a hard time breathing
- Sweating, shaking, and twitching
- Headaches, feeling very tired, and having a hard time sleeping
- Upset stomach, urinating often, or diarrhea

Types of Anxiety Disorders

Different anxiety disorders have different signs. This also means that each type of anxiety disorder has its own treatment plan. The most common anxiety disorders include:

1. **Panic Disorder:** When a person has panic attacks (sudden feelings of extreme fear) without warning, they may have a panic disorder. Panic attacks can feel like a heart attack and make it hard to breath.
2. **Phobias:** Most people with phobias have something that causes them extreme anxiety. To avoid panicking, someone with specific phobias will work hard to avoid what causes their panic. Depending on the type and number of phobias, this fear, and controlling it can take over a person's life.
3. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** GAD produces constant worry that last for hours each day. This makes it hard to focus or finish daily tasks.
4. **Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD):** SAD is intense fear of "saying something stupid," or "not knowing what to say" with groups of people. Someone with SAD may not talk often, speak up in class, or may feel alone. Panic attacks can be a common.

What are the causes?

Scientists believe that many factors combine to cause anxiety disorders, a few of the factors are:

- **Family:** Some anxiety disorders may run in families.
- **Environment:** Experiencing a very stressful event (like a death of a loved one, or abuse) can contribute to anxiety disorders.

Diagnosis

Signs of an anxiety disorder can make them hard to diagnose. Many people who have an anxiety disorder also have another mental health condition. Doctors may do exams, evaluations and tests as well as suggest that a person sees a mental health professional before diagnosing them with an anxiety disorder.

Treatment

There are different treatments for each kind of anxiety. Some treatments can be:

- **Psychotherapy**, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).
- **Medications**
- **Stress and relaxation techniques**, such as yoga, exercise or meditation.