



Mental Disorders

Anxiety

Anxiety is the most common mental disorder in the United States. Anxiety is defined as excessive fear and worry that is difficult to control and negatively impacts daily life activities. Women are more likely than men to develop an anxiety disorder and most people develop an anxiety disorder before they reach age 21. There are no official causes of anxiety disorder, however people that have family members that have anxiety are at risk for developing anxiety disorder. People that have a history of trauma and stress are especially at risk for developing an anxiety disorder.

There are several different types of Anxiety disorders.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)
Separation Anxiety Disorder
Panic Disorder

Symptoms

- Emotional Symptoms

Restlessness & irritability
Feeling tense & jumpy
Feeling apprehensive and dread
Predicting the worst things that could happen

Physical Symptoms

- Shortness of breath
- Upset stomach, frequent urination & diarrhea
- Heart pounding and racing
- Sweating and twitching



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Warning Signs

- **Agitation and easily triggered by distress:** Becoming overly emotional when something goes wrong in daily activities (i.e. crying, argumentative, restlessness)
- **“What-if’s”:** Always wondering or asking questions about matters that are out of your control.
- **Avoidance:** Avoiding going places or doing certain things out of fear or worry of what could happen.
- **Easily distracted:** Having difficulty concentrating or completing tasks.
- **Sleepless Problems:** Insomnia, nightmares, trouble winding down for bed because so much is on the mind.
- **Physical complaints:** Having physical problems such as upset stomach, headaches, and pains where there is no medical cause.
- **Perfectionism:** Placing high and unrealistic standards for yourself in your daily activities. Worried about not getting things done “just right.”

Treatment

- **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- **Medication**
- **Stress & Relaxation Techniques**
- **Yoga**
- **Self-management and Education**

Sources: Anxiety Wellness Center, NAMI