



# DON'T GO IT ALONE.

There's help and hope to manage your anxiety.

We all feel anxious from time to time. Problems at work, concern over taking a test or having to make an important decision can make you feel anxious. And that's perfectly normal.

But for a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can worsen over time. Persistent, uncontrollable anxiety can be overwhelming, and can get in the way of daily activities such as job performance, schoolwork and relationships. Left untreated, anxiety can affect your productivity and diminish your quality of life.

## Types of anxiety

There are different types of anxiety disorders. Examples include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder and social anxiety disorder. Knowing the signs and symptoms is the first step toward getting help.

### Generalized anxiety disorder

Excessive anxiety and worrying for months on end may indicate that you have generalized anxiety disorder. You may also face several other anxiety-related symptoms.

#### Symptoms include:

- ▶ Restlessness, or feeling wound-up or on edge
- ▶ Sleep problems; being easily fatigued
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating, or having your mind go blank
- ▶ Muscle tension
- ▶ Difficulty controlling worry

### Panic disorder

If you often face unexpected panic attacks – sudden periods of intense fear – you may have panic disorder. Your heart pounds, you may sweat or tremble, feel shortness of breath, smothering or choking. These and other feelings can be frightening.

#### Symptoms include:

- ▶ Feelings of impending doom
- ▶ Feelings of being out of control
- ▶ Intense worries about when the next attack will happen
- ▶ Fear or avoidance of places where panic attacks have occurred in the past

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## Types of anxiety (continued)

### Social anxiety disorder

Social anxiety disorder – sometimes called “social phobia” – is an extreme fear of social or performance situations. It can make you feel embarrassed, judged or fearful of offending others.

#### Symptoms include:

- › Feeling highly anxious about being with other people and having a hard time talking to them
- › Feeling self-conscious in front of other people and worried about being humiliated, embarrassed or rejected
- › Staying away from places where there are other people
- › Having a hard time making friends and keeping friends
- › Blushing, sweating or trembling around other people
- › Feeling sick to your stomach near other people

## Treatment and therapies

Diagnosing anxiety disorder often begins with a visit to your primary care provider, since certain medical conditions (such as an overactive thyroid or low blood sugar) – or even certain medications – can worsen an anxiety disorder. Seeing a mental health professional or licensed therapist is also helpful, since anxiety disorders often coexist with related conditions such as depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

### Psychotherapy or “talk therapy”

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) teaches you different ways of thinking, behaving and reacting to anxiety-producing and fearful situations. CBT can help you learn and practice social skills, which is vital for treating social anxiety disorders.

### Self-help or support groups

Joining a self-help or support group and sharing your problems and achievements with others may help.

### Stress management techniques and meditation

To help calm anxiety symptoms and enhance the effects of therapy, relaxation techniques are found to be quite effective.

### Medication

- › Taking medication does not cure anxiety, but it can help relieve some of the symptoms.
- › Medication can only be prescribed by a medical doctor (such as a psychiatrist or primary care provider) or, in a few states, a psychologist.
- › The most common medications used to treat anxiety disorders are antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs and beta-blockers.

**Source:** National Institute of Mental Health. “Anxiety Disorders.” <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml> (last revised March 2016).

## KEEP WATCH!

Some antidepressants may cause some people to have suicidal thoughts or make suicide attempts. Anyone taking an antidepressant should be monitored closely, especially when they first start taking it.



This is general health information and not medical advice or services. Always consult with your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing and health care recommendations.

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