



LEARNING ABOUT ANXIETY

Anxiety is a normal part of life for everyone. But if feelings of intense fear and distress are overwhelming and prevent us from doing everyday things, an anxiety disorder may be the cause. Anxiety disorder is real. Learn more.

What are Anxiety Disorders?

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health issue in the United States. An estimated 40 million American adults, or 18%, have an anxiety disorder. Most people with anxiety disorders develop symptoms before age 21, and women are 60% more likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder than men.

What Are the Signs of Anxiety?

Anxiety disorders are a group of related conditions that have unique symptoms. However, all anxiety disorders have one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening.

Emotional symptoms may include:

- Feelings of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense and jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst

Physical symptoms may include:

- Racing heartbeat or shortness of breath
- Upset stomach
- Sweating, tremors and twitches
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia

Types of Anxiety Disorders

Different anxiety disorders have various symptoms. This means that each type of anxiety disorder has its own treatment plan.

Panic Disorder

Panic disorder is characterized by panic attacks, or sudden feelings of terror that sometimes strike repeatedly and without warning. Often mistaken for a heart attack,



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a panic attack causes powerful, physical symptoms including chest pain, heart palpitations, dizziness, shortness of breath and stomach upset. Many people will go to desperate measures to avoid having an attack, including social isolation or avoiding going to specific places.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

GAD produces chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday life. This can consume hours each day, making it hard to concentrate or finish routine daily tasks. A person with GAD may become exhausted by worry and experience headaches, tension or nausea.



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24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-800-392-8343
Appointments and Information: 936-634-5010

Social Anxiety Disorder

Unlike shyness, this disorder causes intense fear, often driven by irrational worries about social humiliation, like “saying something stupid,” or “not knowing what to say.” Someone with social anxiety disorder may not take part in conversations, contribute to class discussions, or offer their ideas, and may become isolated. Panic attack symptoms are a common reaction.

Other anxiety disorders include: agoraphobia, separation anxiety disorder and substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder involving intoxication or withdrawal or medication treatment.

Diagnosing Anxiety Disorders

The physical symptoms of an anxiety disorder can be easily confused with other medical conditions like heart disease or hyperthyroidism. Therefore, a doctor will likely perform an evaluation involving a physical examination, an interview and lab tests. After ruling out a medical illness, the doctor may recommend a person see a mental health professional to make a diagnosis.

How are Anxiety Disorders Treated?

As each anxiety disorder has a different set of symptoms, the types of treatment that a mental health professional may suggest also can vary. But there are common types of treatment that are used:

- Psychotherapy, including cognitive behavioral therapy
- Medication, including anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants
- Complementary health approaches, including a better diet, more exercise and avoiding drugs and alcohol, are often effective in reducing anxiety

Helping Someone Who has an Anxiety Disorder?

If you or someone you know may have an anxiety disorder, seeing a mental health professional is the best first step. If you or someone you know is in crisis, get help quickly. In East Texas, Burke has a **24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-800-392-8343**.

For general information and appointments, call Burke at 936 634-5010.

Resources

This content was developed from information posted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Visit www.nami.org for more information.



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