

Anxiety Disorders

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety can be a normal, helpful reaction to give you energy to get things done. At other anxiety can be out of control, giving you a sense of uncertainty, dread and fear for no real reason. This kind of anxiety is a real problem and can disrupt your life. Anxiety disorders refer to a number of conditions which are explained in this brochure.

What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder?

It's a feeling that something unpleasant or threatening is going to happen, even though there is no apparent cause for worry.

What are the Signs and Symptoms Of Generalised Anxiety?

The person may have

- Muscle tension and fatigue
- Headache
- Loss of consciousness
- Trembling / shaking
- Shortness of breath or rapid and deep breathing
- Increased heart beat (palpitation) and raised blood pressure
- Sweat, dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Inability to concentrate
- Irritability, irrationality, loss of control
- Uncertainty, self doubt, helplessness

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- Diarrohea
- Loss of Sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in the menstrual cycle

Levels Of Anxiety:

Level	Physiological Responses	Behavioural Changes
Mild	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps in concentration, learning, and problem solving• Appears alert, confident and secure• Person may have slight discomfort, restlessness and tension but these symptoms do not interrupt daily activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to work towards a goal• Examine alternatives
Mode-rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent changes in the topics of conversation, questions, and body posture• Increased pulse rate, respiration, shakiness, voice tremors, and difficulty in concentrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on immediate events• Take guidance from others
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased pulse, respiration and blood pressure• Somatic complaints• Difficulty in concentrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling of increaseingly threatened• Purposeless activites. e.g Pacing, and hand wringing

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What Causes Anxiety Disorders?

- It may begin during or after a stressful event as the death of a loved one
- Some people say they have been anxious all their lives
- Others suddenly become anxious but cannot give a reason
- Anxiety may be a side effect of a medication or illness
- Anxiety disorders often run in families

What is Panic Disorder?

Sudden unexpected and unexplained periods of intense fear. These are called panic attacks. The person may experience:-

- Chest pressure, chest pain or palpitation;
- Increased heart beat;
- Dizziness or lightheadedness;
- Shortness of breath or tightness in the throat; hyperventilation;
- Sweating, trembling or shaking;
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet;
- Fear of losing control;
- Fear of dying.

Panic attach happen usually in early 20's and are rare after the age of 65 year. Panic disorder is twice as common in women, then me. This lead to a persistent concern about future painc attacks, worry about their effects on life, health, work, family. Many people who seek treatment also have agoraphobia.

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What is Agoraphobia?

Anxiety about being in a place or a situation in which escape might be difficult or embarrassing, or help is not available in case of panic attack

People with agoraphobias:

- May dread bridges, tunnels, elevators, theatres, restaurants, buses, trains, crowded rooms and streets;
- Avoid these situations entirely or need the presence of a family member or a friend to feel safe;
- A few are confined to their homes and cannot even go to the bathroom alone.

How Can You Help A Person With These Anxiety Disorders?

- Encourage them to talk about their feelings of discomfort, fear and uneasiness
- Involve them in individual activities and group activities
- Try to reduce anxious situations
- Give medications as prescribed by their doctor
- Protect them from harm
- Ensure follow-up appointments with the doctor so that he can monitor progress and make recommendations
- Psychological management is also helpful.

Tips On Coping With Anxiety:

- Exercise regularly;
- Get plenty of sleep;
- Avoid alcohol and other substances;
- Avoid caffeine.

For further information, please contact:

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Anxiety Disorder

A Guide For Patients/Families



This brochure provides information about Anxiety Disorder, its types, signs and symptoms, different levels, causes, and coping strategies. It is designed to respond to the questions most frequently asked by patients and his/her family.



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