

Anxiety



Anxiety, a common emotional state characterized by a mixture of feelings of fear accompanied by tension, or nervousness, resulting in simple and different physical symptoms (such as feeling shaky, heart palpitations, or sweating—depending on the importance of the event facing the person) and it is considered a natural response to external pressures, for example: Feeling anxious about an exam, a job interview, or giving a speech. As for fear, it is an emotional response to an immediate threat, as the individual confronts or escapes in other words, i.e., he stays to fight or escapes leaving the danger behind.

In general, it is normal for a person to feel anxious from time to time. It is a disturbing feeling, but it stimulates the individual to work harder and do his best, and it quickly dissipates.

Although anxiety is a normal feeling that people experience, it can be considered to be a mental health condition when the feelings are persistent, excessive and intense, often in relation to everyday situations and negatively affects the individual's functioning, routine daily activities, productivity and social relationships (for example feeling anxious about meeting friends, going to the shop)

What are the signs of anxiety?

Signs of anxiety vary from person to person and may range from physical issues such as unexplained gastronomic complaints, sweating or breathing difficulties, to psychological issues such as a sense of impending danger or. It may also include other symptoms such as nightmares, panic attacks, and the passage of painful memories that cannot be controlled.

General signs of anxiety include:

- Increased heart rate
- Fast breathing
- Insomnia
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Shortness of breath
- Dry mouth
- Excessive sweating
- Shudder or chills with a high temperature
- Fear and apprehension
- Persistent numbness or tingling

Types of anxiety-related conditions:

Anxiety is common to many different mental health conditions. Some types of anxiety disorders are:

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** Generalized Anxiety Disorder, GAD, is an anxiety disorder characterized by chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry, and tension, especially without any immediate or present threat.
- **Panic disorder:** Is identified an individual experiences repeated panic attacks, which are episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes.
- **Phobia:** which is an excessive fear of a specific thing, situation, or activity.
- **Social anxiety disorder:** involves high levels of anxiety, fear and avoidance of social situations due to feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness and concern about being judged or viewed negatively by others.
- **Obsessive-compulsive disorder:** Is when a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts and/or behaviors that they feel the urge to repeat repetitively.

Treatment/Support for anxiety and anxiety conditions:

1. **Assessment and Psychoeducation:** to learn as much as possible about what you are experiencing, from a trusted professional or peer.
2. **Psychotherapy:** it aims to help people learn about stress factors in their lives and work on coping strategies.
3. **Relaxation techniques, breathing techniques and exercising:** It helps the person to relieve stress.
4. **Case management support:** that aims to provide support to the person and his family who may feel confused and distressed. Support and education for parents and an understanding of the environment are part of the treatment.
5. **Medicines:** Anti-anxiety medications (anxiolytics) can play an important role in treating some types and more serious levels of anxiety.

Do you know?

It is normal for a person to feel anxious from time to time, and low-level anxiety is sometimes beneficial. But if you feel anxious most of the time and and/or if it is negatively impacting your daily life or out of proportion to the related fears/stressors, and this anxiety disrupts your daily life and hinders you from practicing certain activities, such as using the elevator or leaving the house, then you may have an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders cause stress or worry that is excessive, chronic or irrational

Living with anxiety disorders can be difficult, but treatment is available. Psychotherapy can help control symptoms, and medications can help when prescribed. Also, learning some healthy skills to deal with and control anxiety disorders helps to make life easier.

Important recommendations for a person with an anxiety disorder:

- **Psychoeducation:** learn as much as possible about what you are experiencing, from a trusted professional or peer.
- **Take care of yourself:** get enough rest, follow a balanced diet, exercise, and take time to relax. In addition, avoid caffeine and nicotine, as they increase feelings of anxiety. Do not consume alcohol or drugs (over the counter) to try to get relief, as they both have the potential to worsen the symptoms.
- **Manage Stress levels:** monitor and check in regularly with your feelings, identify and be aware of your own triggers and warning signs and have a plan in place for when they are detected
- **Adhere to your treatment plan:** follow your treatments according to the mental health team's recommendations and stick to the dates of your treatment sessions, as regularity helps your treatment proceed on the right path.
- **Be social:** Try to not let your anxiety isolate you from the people you love or from practicing the activities that you enjoy, as socializing with others helps you recover.
- **Do relaxation exercises:** such as slow breathing exercises (inhale, exhale, counting to five each time), meditation in nature, or anything else that makes you feel comfortable, as they routinely contribute to reducing anxiety.
- **Set a daily period of time to think about the life events that may lead to anxiety** (30 minutes, for example). If the disturbing thoughts appear outside the specified time, tell yourself that you will take care of them at the time specified for them.
- **Identify the feelings of fear or anxiety and name them**, this contributes to calming the mind, for example: How do I feel? How did my body react to these feelings, and finally what can be done to manage or improve the status quo?
- **Talk about what bothers or worries you to the people you trust** or seek help from a case manager from the primary health care centers.

Important recommendations for caregivers treating people who may have anxiety disorders

- **Avoid blaming them** and be sure that these people have thought a lot before any step they took. Deal with the current situation and what happened, not what they could have done, and they didn't.
- **Avoid exerting pressure** on the individual suffering from anxiety disorder, as he needs the support, understanding and love of those around him to be able to control his fears. For example, it is advisable not to accuse the individual of negligence or exaggeration.
- **If the person has an episode of severe anxiety:** Show your understanding of what they are going through and listen carefully to his fears without trying to belittle what he is experiencing, and do not try to distract him to other things.
- **If the person has a panic attack:** Reassure the person that you are on his side and that you are ready to listen to them or to provide the help they need. Ask them to breathe slowly, walk with them if they want to walk, use grounding techniques by getting in touch with and focusing on their senses, what they feel, hear, taste, see and hear and seek help from a mental health professional if needed.