

# ANXIETY DISORDERS



## ANXIETY DISORDERS

are **real medical conditions** that can affect your work, your family, and your social life.

Anxiety disorders affect millions of American adults each year. Fortunately, they're treatable.

**For treatment information,  
patient interviews, and more, visit:**

**[www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com)**





Understanding Anxiety Disorders

Stresses at work or in the family can make anyone feel anxious. It’s normal when scary or new situations worry you. Usually, when the stress goes away, the anxiety does, too.

But, if you have an anxiety disorder, **you’re always worried**. It follows you everywhere and every day. It interrupts sleep and affects your normal activities.

Common symptoms

There are several types of anxiety disorders, each with its own symptoms. But, they have these things in common:

- **Extreme fear and dread** even when there is no real danger
- Emotional distress that **interferes with daily life**
- A tendency to **avoid situations** that bring on anxiety

Anxiety disorders are real, medical conditions. They affect millions of American adults each year.

Most people with an anxiety disorder can be helped with **medicine, psychotherapy (talking with a mental-health professional), or a combination of both**.

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Visit [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com) to hear real people like Debra talk about their experiences living with anxiety disorders.

Types Of Anxiety Disorders

There are several types of anxiety disorders. Each has somewhat different symptoms, but all can disrupt your life.

Social Anxiety Disorder

What It Is	Coping Tips
Social anxiety disorder, or “social phobia,” involves extreme anxiety, fear, and embarrassment in social situations. Symptoms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Blushing</li><li>○ Sweating</li><li>○ Pounding heart</li><li>○ Shaky voice</li><li>○ Trembling</li><li>○ Dry mouth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Seek support</b> from family and friends.</li><li>○ <b>Set small goals</b> for facing your fears, like raising your hand in a meeting.</li><li>○ <b>Control your symptoms</b> with slow, deep breathing and muscle relaxation.</li><li>○ <b>Limit or avoid</b> alcohol and caffeine.</li><li>○ Get <b>regular exercise, plenty of sleep, and eat healthy foods</b>.</li><li>○ <b>Join a support group</b> for people who have social anxiety disorder.</li></ul>



Panic Disorder

What It Is	Coping Tips
<p>Panic disorder causes sudden, frequent feelings of intense fear, called panic attacks. Common symptoms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Pounding heart</li><li>○ Chest pains</li><li>○ Feeling short of breath</li><li>○ Feeling dizzy</li><li>○ Tingling or numbness</li><li>○ Hot flashes or chills</li><li>○ Nausea</li><li>○ Feeling suffocated</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Learn how to relax.</b> Try deep breathing exercises, yoga, or visualization.</li><li>○ <b>Get regular exercise.</b> Spend a half-hour a day on an activity that you enjoy.</li><li>○ <b>Talk to someone.</b> Support from family and friends can help you manage your anxiety.</li></ul>

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

What It Is	Coping Tips
<p>Having generalized anxiety disorder usually means feeling severe worry and anxiety almost daily for 6 months or more. Other symptoms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Headaches</li><li>○ Feeling restless</li><li>○ Feeling irritable</li><li>○ Trembling</li><li>○ Sleep problems</li><li>○ Tense muscles</li><li>○ Trouble concentrating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Talk</b> about your feelings with family and friends.</li><li>○ <b>Focus</b> on positive thoughts and accept the things you can't change.</li><li>○ <b>Relax.</b> Try yoga, meditation, or deep breathing exercises.</li><li>○ <b>Make time</b> to relax, exercise, and do activities that you enjoy.</li></ul>

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Visit [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com) to hear Kathleen describe what she does to manage her anxiety symptoms.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

What It Is	Coping Tips
<p>Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) has two main parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Thoughts that keep repeating</b> (obsessions).</li><li>2. <b>Actions that you repeat</b> (compulsions) to ease the anxiety caused by your thoughts.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Learn about OCD.</b> This will help you stay focused and upbeat while being treated.</li><li>○ <b>Be proud of improvement,</b> even if it is just “baby steps.”</li><li>○ <b>A daily routine</b> can help divert you from worries.</li><li>○ <b>Direct your energy</b> to hobbies and physical activities.</li></ul>



Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

What It Is	Coping Tips
PTSD is triggered by trauma or very stressful events, like <b>combat, or a natural disaster</b> . Symptoms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Flashbacks, frequent nightmares, or memories of the event.</li><li>○ Avoiding reminders of the trauma.</li><li>○ Feeling restless, having trouble concentrating, and problems sleeping.</li><li>○ Headaches, chest pain, and other body pain.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Talk openly</b> with your family and friends. Discuss the traumatic event.</li><li>○ <b>Exercise regularly</b> to work out feelings of frustration and anger.</li><li>○ <b>Relax.</b> Try yoga, meditation, or deep breathing exercises.</li><li>○ <b>Make time</b> to relax, exercise, and do activities that you enjoy.</li></ul>

Specific Phobias

What It Is	Coping Tips
A phobia is an intense fear of something that's not a real danger. Symptoms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Avoiding the thing you fear.</li><li>○ Knowing your fear is extreme, but not being able to control it.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ When you're anxious, <b>remind yourself that you aren't really in danger.</b></li><li>○ Try <b>slow, deep breathing</b> and muscle relaxation.</li><li>○ <b>Limit or avoid alcohol and caffeine.</b></li><li>○ <b>Join a support group</b> for people who have phobias.</li></ul>

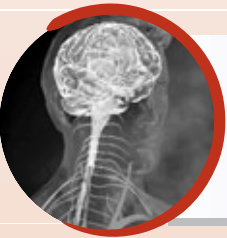
How Anxiety Disorders Happen

Scientists don't yet know the exact causes of anxiety disorders. But they do have several theories:

- The brain sends and receives messages from the rest of your body with the help of certain chemicals. Some anxiety disorders happen when these chemicals are out of balance, sending the wrong messages to the body.
- Another cause of anxiety disorders is when parts of the brain don't work properly. In some people with anxiety disorders, especially phobias, the brain interprets messages from your senses as threats, causing fear.
- Posttraumatic stress disorder may affect the part of the brain that helps store memories. This would explain the repeating flashbacks and nightmares.

The good news is that there are treatments available to help you manage your symptoms, whatever their cause.

LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN™



Visit [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com) to see an animation of how anxiety disorders affect the brain.



## Anxiety Disorders & Depression

Anxiety disorders and depression often occur together. Anxiety can wear you down and disrupt your life. Over time, you may feel frustrated, sad, and hopeless.

People who are depressed often feel like they can't escape the darkness. But, most people with depression get better when they're treated. If you feel you have an anxiety disorder or feel depressed, talk to your healthcare provider right away. Treatment for depression can include medicines, psychotherapy, or both.

The symptoms that help a doctor identify depression include:

- Constant feelings of sadness, irritability, or tension
- Decreased interest or pleasure in usual activities or hobbies
- Loss of energy, feeling tired despite lack of activity
- A change in appetite, with significant weight loss or weight gain
- A change in sleeping patterns, such as difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, or sleeping too much
- Restlessness or feeling slowed down
- Decreased ability to make decisions or concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or guilt
- Thoughts of suicide or death

If you are experiencing any or several of these symptoms, you should talk to your doctor about whether you are suffering from depression.

**If you are in an immediate serious crisis, please contact your doctor or go to your local hospital or emergency room.**

## Learn About Medications

There are several types of medicine used to treat anxiety disorders. These drugs can reduce or eliminate symptoms. Medicine is often used together with psychotherapy ("talk therapy") and/or relaxation techniques.

Depending on the medicine, it can take four weeks or more before you notice a change in your symptoms. It may be longer before you feel the full benefits. Give it time. Your doctor will decide how long you need to stay on medicine. **Understanding and following your doctor's directions is key to successful management of anxiety disorders.**

Some medicines target chemicals in the brain called **neurotransmitters**. These may relieve the symptoms of anxiety disorders. Others reduce the body's response to stress and anxiety.

**Medicines prescribed to treat anxiety disorders include:**

### Antidepressants

Some medicines used to treat depression also treat anxiety disorders. They work by changing the brain's balance of chemical messengers, also called neurotransmitters.

There are several types of antidepressants. Each has different potential side effects that vary from person to person. Some common side effects of antidepressants include:

- Nausea
- Problems sleeping or drowsiness
- Dry mouth
- Weight changes
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Irritability/anxiety
- Sexual problems
- Sweating
- Dizziness



## Learn About Medications (cont.)

### Anti-anxiety medicines

These medicines include sedatives that quickly relieve anxiety. Some side effects of these may include:

- ☐ Drowsiness
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Dependence
- ☐ Loss of coordination (clumsiness/unsteadiness)
- ☐ Mental slowing

Talk to your doctor if you have questions about any medicine you have been prescribed or any problems you think may be related to your medicine.

### Alternative treatments

A number of herbs, minerals, supplements, and alternative medicines have been promoted as remedies for anxiety. **Always consult with your doctor before using any alternative treatment.**

Like any medication, some herbs, minerals, and other supplements can interact with drugs or foods and produce side effects. Just because something is natural does not mean that it is safe.

## 1ON1 WITH PATIENTS



Visit [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com) and listen to patients like Patricia describe what treatments work for them.

## Treatment Tips

**People respond differently to medicine.** You and your doctor may need to try more than one medicine to find the one that works best for you.

**Some medicines need time to work.** So, don't give up if you don't feel better overnight.

Be patient and follow your doctor's recommendations. If you still feel the medicine isn't helping after a few weeks, ask your doctor about changing the dose or trying something else. **Never stop taking any drug without first checking with your doctor.**

To get the best results from your medicine:

- ☐ Follow all instructions on the label.
- ☐ Take doses at the same time every day.
- ☐ Don't stop a medicine suddenly or change your dose without consulting your doctor.
- ☐ Call your doctor if you have questions.
- ☐ Ask your doctor about food and drug interactions.
- ☐ If your medicine doesn't seem to be helping, ask your doctor whether another medicine may be better for you.





## Other Therapies

**Psychotherapy, or “talk therapy,”** is an important tool for treating anxiety disorders. For some disorders, psychotherapy may work well on its own. But, many people with chronic anxiety do better with treatment that **combines psychotherapy and medicine**.

Regular sessions with a trained mental-health professional can teach you new ways to think about and deal with your anxiety. You can actually change the way you think about things so that, over time, you will be **less likely to have symptoms**.

**Therapy also helps you feel less alone.** When you meet with a psychotherapist—either one-on-one or as part of a group—you can get support, advice, feedback, and information. Just knowing that you have someone to confide in can help you feel less isolated.

### Types of psychotherapy

Anxiety disorders are treated with several types of psychotherapy. Sometimes two approaches combined work best.

## 1ON1 WITH PATIENTS



*Alex discovered that a number of his family members also had an anxiety disorder. Hear more about him at [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com).*

## Finding A Therapist

Several types of mental-health professionals treat anxiety, including:

- Psychiatrists
- Nurse practitioners
- Psychologists
- Professional counselors
- Social workers

If you don't know which type will best meet your needs, ask your doctor for advice.

**Your doctor can refer you to a qualified therapist.** You also may ask for recommendations from clergy members, school counselors, the local health department, hospitals, crisis centers, and mental-health organizations.

### Interviewing professionals

When you first call a mental-health professional, spend a few minutes learning about the therapist's philosophy and treatment approach. Find out if he or she **specializes in a certain area**, such as behavioral therapy or family counseling. If you feel comfortable talking with him or her, make an appointment.

The first time you meet with your therapist, he or she may ask you a number of questions. The questions may cover not only your symptoms, but also your personal history, family, and friends. This information **helps the therapist assess your situation** and map out a treatment plan.

After a few visits, assess your progress. If you're not comfortable with your therapist at this point, talk about your feelings during a session. If you can't resolve the problem, don't be afraid to contact another professional. Feeling comfortable with the professional you choose is very important to the success of your treatment.

Get more at [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com)



## Make Lifestyle Changes

Along with medicines and psychotherapy, **simple lifestyle changes** can help you manage your anxiety. These are **long-term strategies** that work best if you practice them regularly:

- **Know yourself.** Try to spot the situations and thoughts that bring on anxiety. Keep a journal. Write about your feelings and your reactions to events.
- **Think positively.** Challenge your negative thoughts. When you're caught up in worry, don't let it take over. **Change the situation** if you can. If you can't do anything, accept it and move on.
- **Don't go it alone.** Discuss your feelings with family and close friends. Tell them about the steps you're taking to get better. Ask them to participate in your recovery.
- **Have fun.** You may feel overwhelmed by work or family responsibilities, but that's no reason to deprive yourself of pleasure. If you take time for fun, you may be able to deal with daily challenges better.
- **Live the good life.** Eat a healthy diet. Limit caffeine and alcohol. Get lots of sleep and make time for regular exercise.
- **Learn to relax.** Drink a warm, noncaffeinated beverage. Take long walks and warm baths. Listen to soothing music. Get a massage.

## Keep A Journal

Keeping a journal can help you **learn more about your thoughts and feelings**. It's not always easy—it can be painful to write about bad feelings. But, writing in a journal is a great self-help method you can use.

### Tips for keeping a journal:

- Instead of just writing about events and happenings, **focus on your thoughts and feelings** about those events.
- **Write for yourself only.** This forces you to be honest. (At some point, though, you may want to share the journal with someone. This could be a therapist, or a trusted friend, or family member who can give you feedback.)
- **Set the stage for writing.** Find a comfortable spot to sit, take a deep breath, and begin. Keep writing for 20 minutes without stopping.
- **Write every day, if possible.** It may help to write at the same time every day, maybe after dinner or before bed.
- **Remember that the way you write doesn't matter.** You don't have to use complete sentences, correct punctuation, or any punctuation.
- **Buy a journal you'll enjoy using,** perhaps with illustrations or colored pages. Use colored pens or pencils if you like.
- If you really don't like to write, **record your thoughts** on a mini-cassette recorder.





## Talk With Your Doctor

Anxiety disorders are serious conditions that get in the way of daily life. The good news is that, for most people, **anxiety disorders are treatable**.

Everyone responds to treatment differently. Some people have more than one type of anxiety disorder or have depression as well. So, treatment must be tailored to your own needs.

Work with your doctor to **find what works best for you**. If one treatment doesn't work, the odds are good that another one will.

## LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN™



Visit [www.1on1health.com](http://www.1on1health.com) to be guided through three types of relaxation exercises: visualization, breathing, and stretching.

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