

# Anxiety Disorders

## (Easy Reading Version)



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Everyone gets nervous or anxious sometimes. Sometimes, the anxiety gets so strong that it gets in the way of everyday life. This is called an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are very common.

### Symptoms

Emotional symptoms:

1. Feelings of dread
2. Feeling tense, jumpy, or moody
3. Expecting the worst and watching for signs of danger
4. Refusing to go to school or acting out at home

Physical symptoms:

1. Racing heart, sweating, shaking hands, and shortness of breath
2. Headaches, feeling tired, not being able to sleep
3. Upset stomach, diarrhea, needing to go to the bathroom a lot

### Types of Anxiety Disorders

There are different types of anxiety disorders. The most common anxiety disorders are:

1. **Panic Disorder:** Having sudden feelings of fear (panic attacks). They often feel like a heart attack. They can cause chest pain, racing heart, feeling dizzy, shortness of breath, or upset stomach.
2. **Phobias:** Phobias are strong fears without a good reason. A common phobia is spiders. A person with a phobia of spiders may feel scared just being close to a spider. People will work hard to avoid their phobias. Trying to stay away from their fears can take over a person's life.
3. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** People with GAD feel very worried about everyday life. They may feel tired from worrying. The worrying may give them headaches, tension, or an upset stomach.
4. **Social Anxiety Disorder:** People with this disorder have intense fear of embarrassing themselves in front of others. They may be scared to talk in large groups. They may have panic attacks.

### Causes

Scientists believe that many things combine to cause anxiety disorders:

1. **Genetics:** Anxiety disorders often run in families.
2. **Stress:** A stressful event, such as abuse or a death, can lead to an anxiety disorder.

### Treatment

Each anxiety disorder has different types of treatment:

1. **Psychotherapy:** seeing a therapist and talking about what you are feeling.
2. **Exposure therapy:** This is especially useful for phobias. The therapist has you spend time with the thing you are afraid of. Little by little you get used to it being around. Eventually, you are not afraid anymore.
3. **Medications,** such as anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants.
4. **Complementary health approaches,** such as learning different ways to relax.

See more at: <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Anxiety-Disorders>  
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