

Anxiety disorder

Experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. However, people with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. Anxiety disorder refers to specific psychiatric disorders that involve extreme fear or worry, and includes generalized anxiety disorder , panic disorder and panic attacks, agoraphobia, social anxiety disorder, selective mutism, separation anxiety, and specific phobias.

Common anxiety signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry

When to see your doctor or nurse:

- If you feel like you are worrying too much and it is interfering with your work and other parts of your life.
- If your fear, worry or anxiety is upsetting to you and difficult to control.
- If you feel depressed, have trouble with alcohol or drug use, or have other mental health concerns along with anxiety.
- If you think your anxiety could be linked to a physical health problem.
- If you have suicidal thoughts or behaviours if this is the case, seek emergency immediately.

Complications

- Depression (which often occurs with an anxiety disorder) or other mental health disorders.
- Substance misuse.
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Digestive or bowel problems
- Headaches and chronic pain
- Social isolation
- Problems functioning at school or work
- Poor quality of life
- Suicide

Prevention

- Get help early. Anxiety, like many other mental health conditions, can be harder to treat if you wait.
- Stay active. Participate in activities that you enjoy and that make you feel good about yourself. Enjoy social interaction and caring relationships, which can lessen your worries.
- Avoid alcohol or drug use. Alcohol and drug use can cause or worsen anxiety. If you're addicted to any of these substances, quitting can make you anxious. If you can't quit on your own, see your doctor or find a support group to help you.

Self -test for Anxiety

Over the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?	Not at all 0	Several days 1	More than half the days 2	Nearly every day 3
1. Feeling nervous or anxious or on edge				
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying				
3. Worrying too much about different things				
4. Trouble relaxing				
5. Being so restless that it's hard to sit still				
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable				
7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen				
Add up your results for each column				
Total score (add column totals together)				

Your total score is a guide to how severe your anxiety disorder may be:

- 0 to 4 = mild anxiety
- 5 to 9 = moderate anxiety
- 10 to 14 = moderately severe anxiety
- 15 to 21 = severe anxiety

If your score is 10 or higher, or if you feel that anxiety is affecting your daily life, visit SHS or call your doctor.