



Frequently Asked Questions About Anxiety Disorders

Q: Sometimes I get really nervous or anxious about things that are going on in my life or in the world. Do I have an anxiety disorder?

A: You shouldn't be concerned about experiencing a moderate amount of anxiety. Most people face some anxiety in their daily lives. This is a normal and a beneficial part of living. However, if your anxiety becomes overwhelming, persistent, or begins to interfere with your normal daily activities, you may want to consult your health professional.

Q: What causes an anxiety disorder?

A: Experts believe that anxiety disorders are caused by a combination of biological and environmental factors such as brain chemistry, life events, personality, and genetic predisposition. This makes an anxiety disorder much like any other physical disorder, such as heart disease or diabetes.

Q: What are some of the treatments commonly used for anxiety disorders?

A: Evidence-based treatments include: cognitive behavioral therapy; medication; or a combination of the two. Treatments vary from person to person and depend on the type and severity of the disorder. Talk to your health professional about what treatment options are available and right for you.

Q: How effective are treatments? How long will it take?

A: Up to 90 percent of people can be effectively treated. The goal is for the individual to live a full and productive life without avoidance. The average length of treatment with behavioral therapy is 12 weeks and with medication is several weeks, months, or even years. It is important to remember that the success rates vary with the individual. Additional problems such as clinical depression or alcoholism may complicate proper diagnosis and treatment. Recovery is possible with the proper professional care.

Q: How do I find the right health professional?

A: For more information on how to find a health professional, self-help groups in your area, informational reading materials, statistics and facts about anxiety disorders and specific anxiety disorders, visit the Anxiety Disorders Association of America Web site at www.adaa.org.

There are many trained professionals that can diagnose and treat anxiety disorders, some of which are: doctors; therapists; counselors; clinical social workers; psychiatrists; and psychologists. You might also seek assistance from your primary care doctor or insurer. Remember that you should feel comfortable talking to your provider and that he/she should openly answer all of your questions. If they are not open to your questions, you may want to look for a new health professional.