

A. General Information (World Health Organization)

1. Anxiety disorders are most common in the world: 301 million people in 2019.
2. Onset of symptoms often in childhood or adolescence.
3. Treatment is highly effective.
4. Only 1 in 4 people receive treatment.

B. Types of Anxiety Disorders (World Health Organization)

1. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** persistent and excessive worry about daily activities or events.
2. **Panic Disorder:** panic attacks and fear of continued panic attacks.
3. **Social Anxiety Disorder:** high levels of fear and worry about social situations that might make the person feel humiliated, embarrassed, or rejected.
4. **Separation Anxiety Disorder:** excessive worry about being separated from people with whom the person has a deep emotional bond.
5. **Phobias:** intense, irrational fears of specific objects or situations that lead to avoidance behavior and significant distress.

C. Key Indicators that Run Through Each

1. Persistent
2. Excessive
3. “Most days”
4. Over a period of several months or more
5. Avoidance
6. Interferes to some degree with everyday life and thinking

D. Symptoms that Run Through Each

1. Trouble concentrating
2. Feeling irritable, tense, or restless
3. Experiencing nausea or abdominal distress
4. Heart palpitations
5. Sweating, trembling, shaking
6. Trouble sleeping
7. Fatigue
8. Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom

E. Generalized Anxiety Symptoms (Mayo Clinic)

1. Cognitive Symptoms

- Persistent worrying or anxiety about a number of areas that are out of proportion to the impact of the events
- Overthinking plans and solutions to all possible worst-case scenarios.
- Perceiving situations and events as threatening, even when they are not
- Difficulty handling uncertainty
- Indecisiveness and fear of making the wrong decision
- Inability to set aside or let go of a worry
- “Shifting worries” over time/lifespan
- Inability to relax, feeling restless, and feeling keyed up or on edge
- Difficulty concentrating, or the feeling that your “mind goes blank”

2. Physical Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Muscle tension or aches
- Trembling, feeling twitchy
- Nervousness or being easily startled
- Sweating
- Nausea, diarrhea, or irritable bowel syndrome
- Irritability

3. Symptoms in Children and Teenagers

- Excessive worries about performance at school or sporting events; family members’ safety; being on time; earthquakes, nuclear war or other natural disasters.
- Behaviors:
 - Feeling overly anxious to fit in
 - Perfectionism
 - Redo tasks due to not being perfect the first time
 - Spend excessive time doing homework
 - Lack confidence
 - Strive for approval
 - Require a lot of reassurance about performance
 - Frequent complaints about stomachaches and other physical symptoms
 - Avoid going to school or avoid social situations

F. What Causes Anxiety Disorders?

1. Genetic Disposition
2. Stress “Allergy”
3. Substance abuse induced disorders
4. Trauma

G. When to Seek Professional Help

1. Understand and trust the consistent, unanimous recommendations above.
2. Recommendation is to get help early. The longer these go untreated, they can become more difficult to treat, and patterns of thought and behavior become reinforced.

H. Medication: Debunking Myths

1. Medications are not addictive with exception of benzodiazepines which are effective at treating panic attacks quickly and on an “as-needed basis”.
2. Medications are not “happy pills”; they do not mask problems. They restore a person’s ability to utilize the faculties God gave them to solve and cope with problems.
3. Medications do not change the personality. They allow a normal range and expression of emotion to be accessed and expressed.
4. Medications are typically efficacious and well-tolerated. Although it takes 6-8 weeks for medications to reach a therapeutic dose, many feel relief from symptoms within two weeks. Side effects are generally minimal and short term.
5. Medications need to be dosed “low and slow” to mitigate side effects.
6. Medications are not necessarily “life-long”.

I. Where to Begin when Seeking Help?

1. Primary physicians and pediatricians are often an excellent starting place for diagnosis and medication.
2. Counseling is recommended along with medication. Although it seems overwhelming, here are some suggestions for finding a counselor:
 - Ask friends or family members who have utilized a counselor
 - Ask physician who they recommend on your list of providers
 - Utilize Psychology Today Therapist Directory Listing
 - NBC resource list

J. Everyday Non-Negotiables for Anxiety Sufferers

1. Get enough sleep
2. Reduce stress load and keep it well-managed
3. Nutrition: mostly whole foods; limited or no alcohol; watch caffeine intake
4. Exercise within reason
5. When anxiety is high, limit exposure to emotional disruption, including in Scripture