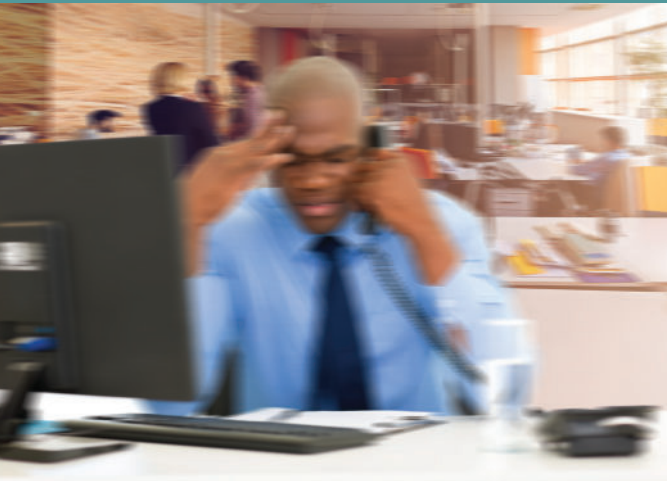


STRESS AND ANXIETY



Stress

What is stress?

Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.¹ Did you know that not all stress is bad?¹

If you think of animals and their natural stress response 'fight or flight' - it can be life-saving!²

However, chronic stress can cause both physical and mental harm.²

Types of stress

Stress can fall into different categories, these are:

- Routine stress, which is related to the pressures of work, family, and other daily responsibilities.²
- Sudden stress that is brought about by a new or negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness.²
- Adjustment disorder is failure to adapt to a stressor that causes significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.³
- Traumatic stress, which happens when in danger of being seriously hurt or killed. This type of stress can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).²

Stress and health

Keeping the body in a 'high alert' stressed state over a long period of time puts a person at risk for health problems, including:¹

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Depression or anxiety
- Acne or eczema
- Menstrual problems

If you already have a health condition, chronic stress can make it worse!¹

More about Adjustment Disorder

An episode of adjustment disorder is commonly related to family or love life, work or school and financial stress.⁴ Adjustment disorders are classified as trauma or stressor-related disorders on the same scale as PTSD!⁴ It is important to know that you can get treatment for these disorders.⁴

Coping with stress

Here are some tips to cope with stress:⁵

- Recognise the signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Effective treatments can help if your stress is affecting your relationships or ability to function at work or at school.
- Get regular exercise. Just 30 minutes per day of walking can help boost your mood and improve your health.
- Try a relaxing activity. Try meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises.
- Set goals and priorities. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much.
- Stay connected. You are not alone. Keep in touch with people who can provide emotional support and practical help.

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What is anxiety?

Stress and anxiety can be inter-linked.¹

Anxiety is stress that continues after the initial stress-factor has gone.¹

Occasional anxiety is normal and not harmful.⁶

Anxiety can become a disorder if a person feels extremely worried or nervous when there is little or no reason to feel that way.⁶

How can you tell if you suffer from generalised anxiety disorder?

Typical signs and symptoms can develop slowly over time.⁶

People may:⁶

- Feel restless with excessive worrying
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Feel easily tired
- Have headaches, stomach aches or unexplained pains
- Tremble or twitch
- Be irritable or feel on edge
- Sweat a lot or feel light-headed

What causes generalized anxiety disorder?

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) can run in families, but stress and environmental factors also play a role.⁶

Treating anxiety | what can YOU do?

The good news is that generalised anxiety disorder is treatable.^{6,7} Anxiety is generally treated with psychotherapy (talking with a therapist or counsellor), medication, or both.⁶



Medication

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and Serotonin-Norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) – these medicines are typically used to treat depression but are helpful for symptoms of anxiety. They may take several weeks to start working.⁶

Benzodiazepines – these are sedative medications, used to manage GAD. These medications are effective in rapidly decreasing anxiety, but they can cause tolerance and dependence if you use them continuously.⁶

Non-benzodiazepine medicines – these are anti-anxiety medicines that do not cause the dependence or cognitive impairment/sedation of the benzodiazepines.^{3,4} They can be used as an alternative to benzodiazepines for short periods at a time, to help in times of high stress or anxiety, without the risk of dependence.^{4,7}

Generalised anxiety disorder can affect all ages⁶ and may become worse during times of stress.⁶ Talk to your doctor about the best treatment for YOU.⁶

When to seek help

Visit your doctor if you feel overwhelmed by stress or anxiety about events in your life, or if it is affecting your health.¹ Your doctor can help you develop ways to reduce stress in your life or to help you cope with anxiety.¹

Please note: This is an informational leaflet only and should not be used for diagnosis. For more information on Stress and Anxiety, consult your health care professional.

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