





Generalized anxiety disorder

Also called: GAD

Severe, ongoing anxiety that interferes with daily activities.

Very common

More than 3 million US cases per year

-  Treatable by a medical professional
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging not required
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong

Generalized anxiety disorder can occur at any age.

The condition has symptoms similar to panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and other types of anxiety. These symptoms include constant worry, restlessness, and trouble with concentration.

Treatment may include counseling and medications, such as antidepressants.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

The condition has symptoms similar to panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and other types of anxiety. These symptoms include constant worry, restlessness, and trouble with concentration.

People may experience:**Pain areas:** in the back**Whole body:** fatigue, lightheadedness, or sweating**Behavioral:** hypervigilance, irritability, or restlessness**Psychological:** severe anxiety, fear, or repeatedly going over thoughts**Cognitive:** lack of concentration or unwanted thoughts**Also common:** emotional distress, excessive worry, difficulty falling asleep, headache, nausea, sensation of an abnormal heartbeat, or trembling**Treatments****Treatment consists of therapy**

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Medications

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRI): Eases symptoms of depressed mood and anxiety.

- Sertraline (Zoloft)
- Escitalopram (Lexapro)
- Citalopram (Celexa)
- Fluoxetine (Prozac and Sarafem)
- Paroxetine (Paxil, Pexeva, and Brisdelle)

Anxiolytic: Relieves anxiety and tension. May promote sleep.

- Buspirone

Antidepressant: Prevents or relieves depression and elevates mood.

- Venlafaxine (Effexor)
- Duloxetine (Cymbalta)

Self-care

Physical exercise: Aerobic activity for 20-30 minutes 5 days a week improves cardiovascular health. If injured, pursuing an activity that avoids the injured muscle group or joint can help maintain physical function while recovering.

Stress management: Pursuing an enjoyable activity or verbalizing frustration to reduce stress and improve mental health.

Relaxation techniques: Deep breathing, meditation, yoga, rhythmic exercise, and other activities that reduce symptoms of stress

Therapies

Mindfulness therapies: The act of turning your attention internally to help manage physical and mental symptoms.

Cognitive behavioral therapy: A talk therapy focused on modifying negative thoughts, behaviors, and emotional responses associated with psychological distress.

Mindfulness: The act of turning your attention internally to help manage physical and mental symptoms.

Psychoanalysis: Uses psychotherapy to treat mental disorders.

Psychotherapy: Treatment of mental or behavioral disorders through talk therapy.

Specialists

Psychiatrist: Treats mental disorders primarily with medications.

Pediatrician: Provides medical care for infants, children, and teenagers.

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

Geriatrician: Focuses on the health care of elderly people.

Clinical psychologist: Treats mental disorders primarily with talk therapy.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)