



Anxiety and Depression

ANXIETY

AND

DEPRESSION

You or someone you know may have been diagnosed with anxiety and depression. What do you do next? As you read this booklet, you will learn about anxiety and depressive disorders, available treatments, and tips for managing symptoms.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE— AND THE ANXIETY DISORDERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (ADAA) IS HERE TO HELP.

Most of us feel anxious or depressed at times. A death in the family, losing a job or home, separation and divorce, financial instability, a severely ill child...the list is endless. Feelings of sadness, loneliness, fear, hopelessness, and anxiety are normal, and they usually pass over time. But if these feelings interfere with daily activities, you may have an anxiety disorder or depression—or both.

It is not uncommon to have anxiety and depression. In fact, about half of those who are diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, and most with depression experience some anxiety symptoms. Women are more likely than men to have depression as well as an anxiety disorder. Many people with an anxiety disorder also may experience periods of depression.

Anxiety and depression are crippling, and they can have profound negative effects on you and your family and friends. They can disrupt your daily activities and affect your ability to care for loved ones and complete tasks related to school or work.

These disorders are real and they are serious, but they can be treated together and separately. There is hope, and finding the right treatment will help you get better.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Anxiety is a normal biological reaction to stress and an important part of living. It helps us get out of harm's way and prepare for important events, and it warns us when we need to take action.

But you may experience anxiety that is persistent, irrational, seemingly uncontrollable, and overwhelming. If it's an excessive, irrational dread of everyday situations, it can be disabling. When anxiety interferes with daily activities, you may have an *anxiety disorder*.

The term "anxiety disorder" refers to generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder (also called social phobia), and specific phobias. Anxiety disorders often run in families and have a biological basis, much like allergies or diabetes. These are real, serious disorders that are treatable.

Each anxiety disorder has specific symptoms. For more details, visit www.adaa.org.



DEPRESSION AND DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

The term “depression” often characterizes feelings of being sad, discouraged, hopeless, unmotivated, as well as a general lack of interest or pleasure in life. When these feelings last for a short period of time, it may be called a passing case of “the blues.” But when they last for more than two weeks and interfere with regular daily activities, it’s likely you have a depressive disorder.

Research shows that depression and anxiety are risk factors for suicide: More than 90 percent of people who commit suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder. Early diagnosis and intervention with appropriate treatment are critical steps to feeling better.

Depressive disorders, also known as mood disorders, include three main types: **major depression**, **dysthymia**, and **bipolar disorder**, and they can occur with any anxiety disorder.

Major depression involves a combination of symptoms that are disabling and interfere with your ability to work, study, eat, and sleep. It may occur once or twice in your lifetime or more frequently. Or you may experience it in relation to the death of a loved one, a romantic breakup, a medical illness, or other life event. Some people may experience physical aches and pains, leading them to believe that these are symptoms of an undiagnosed physical ailment. Others may feel that life is not worth living, and a small number may attempt to end their lives.

Depression is different in each person. No two people experience the same combination, severity, frequency, and duration of symptoms.

THE NUMBERS

Anxiety disorders: more than **40 million** adults in the U.S.

Major depression: about **14.8 million** American adults

Dysthymia: about **3.3 million** American adults

Bipolar disorder: about **5.7 million** American adults

Symptoms of major depression

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities, including sex
- Decreased energy, fatigue, feeling “slowed down”
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or excessive sleeping
- Low appetite and weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Restlessness or irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and pain for which no other cause can be diagnosed

Dysthymia, or dysthymic disorder, is a chronic form of depression that usually continues for at least two years. Although it is less severe than major depression, it involves the same symptoms, mainly low energy, poor appetite or overeating, and insomnia or oversleeping. It can show up as stress, irritability, and mild anhedonia, which is the inability to derive pleasure from most activities.

Bipolar disorder, once called manic-depression, is characterized by moods that shift from severe highs (mania) or mild highs (hypomania) to severe lows (depression). During the manic phase, a person may experience abnormal or excessive elation, irritability, a decreased need for sleep, grandiose notions, increased talking, racing thoughts, increased sexual desire, markedly increased energy, poor judgment, and inappropriate social behavior. During the depressive phase, a person experiences the symptoms of major depression. Mood swings from manic to depressive are often gradual, although they can also take place abruptly.

TREATING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

Anxiety and depression are highly treatable. Therapy and medications have proved effective in treating anxiety and depressive disorders, sometimes with a combination of therapies. Talk with your doctor or therapist about the best treatment for you. New scientific research emerges all the time to improve treatments. This booklet gives an overview of current treatments that are proven effective for these disorders.

Often depression and an anxiety disorder can be treated the same way and at the same time. Treatment should be tailored to your individual diagnosis and designed to help you manage and reduce the symptoms of both disorders. You may have symptoms that require treating one disorder first. The first step is getting the appropriate diagnosis and deciding on a course of treatment that will work for you.

THERAPY

Several forms of psychotherapy are effective. Of these, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a short-term form of psychotherapy that is often very effective. CBT teaches you how to replace negative and unproductive thought patterns with more realistic and useful ones. Treatment focuses on taking specific steps to overcome anxiety and depression, often involving facing your fears.

Interpersonal therapy (IPT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) are also effective types of psychotherapy. Talk to your therapist about which option might be best for you. Find out more about treatment at www.adaa.org.

Other forms of therapy. In addition to psychotherapy, your doctor or therapist may suggest other therapies.

Recent studies have shown **attention training** can be as effective in treating generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder as CBT and medication. Other studies have shown it to be effective in reducing depression symptoms. Attention training helps patients practice how not to focus on threatening words or on images of threatening faces.

Family therapy uses strategies to reduce the level of distress within a family that may contribute to a person's symptoms or result from them.

Relaxation techniques—breathing re-training, progressive muscle relaxation, and exercise—may help you develop the ability to cope more effectively with the stresses that contribute to anxiety and mood, as well as physical symptoms.

Particularly effective for bipolar disorder is **interpersonal and social rhythm therapy**. This program stresses maintaining a regular schedule of daily activities and stability in personal relationships. People record the timing of their activities, moods, and levels of social stimulation. As treatment progresses, they work to keep stable social rhythms (when to sleep, exercise, eat, etc.), anticipate events that could disrupt rhythms, and develop plans for continued mood and social rhythm stability.

MEDICATION

Medications are effective. Symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders often occur together, and both respond to treatment with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) and serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI) medications. SSRIs and SNRIs have fewer side effects. These medications must be taken for two to four weeks to experience their full effect, and it may take several weeks to adjust the medication to the correct dosage. Even once you are feeling better, you must continue taking the medications. Changes to a different medication or withdrawal from all medication should be only done under your doctor's supervision.

For information about specific medications approved by the FDA, visit www.fda.gov.



“My depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and social anxiety disorder have been with me forever. But I am fortunate to have received effective treatment from well-trained professionals, and I got my life back.”

Medications for bipolar disorder differ. It is important to get a proper diagnosis and discuss treatment options that will lead to a healthy and productive life. Without treatment, bipolar disorder usually gets worse, causing manic and depressive episodes to become more frequent and more severe, and leading to an increased likelihood of substance abuse and suicide attempts. We know that treating the anxiety is an important component of getting better. Unlike treating depression and anxiety, taking an antidepressant may worsen symptoms of bipolar disorder. Your doctor may suggest a combination of therapies that include medication and CBT, or talk therapy. Finding the right treatment may take some time.

Benzodiazepines are a class of drugs often used to treat anxiety disorders, and they do not appear to have negative effects on bipolar disorder. However, they may cause side effects, including physical dependence and tolerance (a need for more medication over time), as well as some risk of abuse, particularly by those who have experienced alcohol or substance abuse.

Discuss your options with your doctor. And stay in touch to report any side effects, which your doctor will carefully monitor. You may need to try a few different combinations, and it may take some time to find the most effective medications for you.

Detailed information about medications is available at the ADAA website www.adaa.org.



COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Interest in complementary and alternative medicine, or CAM, is growing as consumers and health care professionals search for additional ways to treat anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders.

Complementary medicine is used along with conventional medicine. An example is aromatherapy—inhalating the scent of essential oils to promote health and well-being—to help lessen discomfort following surgery.

Alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine. An example is following a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy recommended by a medical doctor.

Some CAM therapies are currently used to treat anxiety and anxiety disorders. The plant kava has been effective in reducing anxiety symptoms, and evidence for the use of acupuncture in treating anxiety disorders is becoming stronger. Yoga, which combines physical postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and a distinct philosophy, is one of the top ten CAM practices.

Before beginning CAM or any type of treatment, talk to your mental health provider or primary care doctor. Visit <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/whatisacam/> to learn about the great variety of CAM treatments.

Your mental health professional may also recommend self-help materials and regular exercise, which can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders. Ask for guidance and recommendations.

New forms of treatment—medications and therapies—are being developed all the time. Visit www.adaa.org for updates, and ask your doctor about what's new.

GETTING HELP

FIND A THERAPIST

Doctors, therapists, counselors, clinical social workers, psychiatrists, and psychologists are among the many types of trained professionals who can diagnose and treat anxiety and related disorders. 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 or she should openly answer all of your questions.

Most people with an anxiety or depressive disorder can be helped with professional care. The first step is finding a therapist. Here are a few places to start:

- Go to **www.adaa.org** and search by zip code in the *Find a Therapist* database.
- Ask your primary care physician for a referral.
- Look for a support group in your area at **www.adaa.org/supportgroups**.
- Contact your health insurance company for a referral to a specialist.
- Contact a local hospital or university and ask about mental health clinics or staff psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers.
- Check clinical trials for your area at **www.adaa.org/clinicaltrials**.

ASK QUESTIONS

You should feel comfortable asking questions about treatments, training, and fees. Here are some sample questions you may want to ask during a consultation:

- What training and experience do you have in treating anxiety and depressive disorders?
- What is your basic approach to treatment?
- Can you prescribe medication or refer me to someone who can?
- How long is the course of treatment?
- Would I benefit from a combination of treatments?
- How will the treatments affect my sleep and eating?

- Will I be able to function at work or school?
- Can I drink alcohol while taking these medications?
- How frequent are treatment sessions and how long do they last?
- How will I know that the treatments are having a positive effect?
- How long will it take for me to begin feeling better?
- Do you include family members in therapy?
- What is your fee schedule, and do you have a sliding scale for varying financial circumstances?
- What kinds of health insurance do you accept?

HELP YOURSELF

Regular exercise can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and the ten tips below can help you reduce stress.

1. Take a time-out. Practice yoga, listen to music, volunteer, or get a massage. Stepping back from the problem lets you clear your head.
2. Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
3. Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
4. Do your best instead of trying to be perfect. Perfection isn't always possible, so be proud of however close you get.
5. Accept that you cannot control everything. Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?
6. Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly.
7. Count to 10 slowly. Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
8. Welcome humor. A good laugh goes a long way.
9. Maintain a positive attitude. Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
10. Learn what triggers your anxiety. Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and then look for a pattern.

HELP A FAMILY MEMBER OR LOVED ONE

Support is an important part of the recovery process for anyone with an anxiety disorder and depression. Recovery may be stressful for family members and loved ones, so it's helpful to build a support network of relatives, friends, and therapists.

Here's how you can help a loved one.

- Learn about the disorders.
- Recognize and praise small accomplishments.
- Modify expectations during stressful periods.
- Measure progress on the basis of individual improvement, not against some absolute standard.
- Be flexible and try to maintain a normal routine.

Visit the www.adaa.org for more information about helping others.



HELP YOUR CHILD

Like adults, children can develop anxiety and depressive disorders. These disorders may occur along with other mental or physical illnesses, such as eating disorders or ADHD. Your child may also complain of stomach aches, headaches, or other physical symptoms.

Anxiety and depressive disorders in children should be diagnosed early and treated. If your child has some combination of the symptoms listed below or seems out of step with peers or exhibits changes or problems in any of these areas, consider an evaluation from a health care professional:

- Eating habits or appetite
- Sleeping
- Schoolwork
- Activity level
- Mood
- Relationships with family or friends
- Aggressive behavior
- Behavior typical of a younger child
- Speech, language, and other development milestones

It can be difficult for parents to know how to help once their children leave home for college. Investigate mental health and other treatment options available on campus and in the local community. Call the counseling center to inquire about individual or group counseling sessions, support groups, referrals to off-campus centers, and payment issues for the use of these resources. Share what you find, but be patient if your child doesn't seek help right away. It's important especially for young adults to feel that getting treatment is their own decision.

“My son is away at college. He takes medication for his anxiety and depression. When he was at home, I could check on him, but what can I do when he's hours away? He calls when he has anxiety attacks. How can I help him?”

MEDICATION WARNING FOR CHILDREN

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning in October 2004 that antidepressant medications, including SSRIs, may increase suicidal thoughts and behavior in a small number of children and adolescents. The FDA does not prohibit the use of these medications, but it does alert patients and families to the risks, which must be balanced against clinical need.

In May 2007, the FDA proposed that makers of all antidepressant medications update their products' labeling to include warnings about increased risks of suicidal thinking and behavior in young adults ages 18 to 24 during initial treatment (generally the first one to two months). Find out more at the FDA website: www.fda.gov/cder/drug/antidepressants

Discuss all concerns about antidepressants and other medications with your doctor.

ADAA CAN HELP YOU

Suffering from an anxiety disorder and depression can interfere with many aspects of your life. And you may feel alone, embarrassed, or frightened. ADAA can give you the resources to help you and your loved ones better understand your condition, connect you with a community of people who know what you are experiencing, and assist you in finding mental health professionals in your city who can help.

Visit the ADAA website at www.adaa.org and click on Find a Therapist to identify therapists who treat anxiety disorders in your area, as well as local support groups. Learn about the causes, symptoms, and best treatments for all of the disorders, and review questions to ask a therapist or doctor.

The ADAA website provides many resources to help you make the best decisions so that you can get on with your life.

Visit www.adaa.org:

- Sign up for *Triumph*, the ADAA e-newsletter for people living with or interested in anxiety disorders.
- Purchase self-help books and an ADAA inspirational calendar with stress-relief tips.
- Find a therapist, a local support group, or clinical trial.
- Read personal stories of people who have triumphed over anxiety and depression.



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You can make a difference by helping ADAA expand its efforts to reach those with anxiety disorders. Your contribution supports ADAA's efforts to increase awareness that anxiety disorders are real, serious, and treatable. ADAA relies on your donations to provide free educational information about anxiety disorders, help people find treatment, support research, and advocate for improved treatments and access to care.

Donate online at www.adaa.org, on the phone (240-485-1001), or by mail to ADAA, 8730 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910. All donations are tax-deductible.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA) is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the prevention, treatment, and cure of anxiety and anxiety-related disorders and to improve the lives of all people who suffer from them.



For more information:

Anxiety Disorders Association
of America
8730 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
240-485-1001
www.adaa.org