

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Are you extremely worried about everything in your life, even if there is little or no reason to worry? Are you very anxious about just getting through the day? Are you afraid that everything will always go badly? If so, you may have generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).



I was worried all the time about everything. It didn't matter that there were no signs of problems, I just got upset. I was having trouble falling asleep at night, and I couldn't keep my mind focused at work. I felt angry at my family all the time.

how is GAD treated?

First, talk to your doctor about your symptoms. Your doctor should do an exam to make sure that an unrelated physical problem isn't causing the symptoms. The doctor may refer you to a mental health specialist.

▼ **Psychotherapy.** A type of therapy called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is especially useful for treating GAD. It teaches a person different ways of thinking, behaving and reacting to situations that can help him or her feel less anxious and worried.

▼ **Medications.** Doctors also may prescribe medication to help treat GAD. Two types of medications are commonly used to treat GAD—anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants. Anti-anxiety medications are powerful and there are different types. Many types begin working right away, but they generally shouldn't be taken for long periods of time.

Antidepressants are used to treat depression, but they are also helpful for GAD. They may take several weeks to start working. These medications may cause side effects such as headache, nausea or difficulty sleeping. These side effects are usually not severe for most people, especially if the dose starts off low and is increased slowly over time. **Talk to your doctor about any side effects you may have.**

Some people do better with CBT, while others do better with medication. Others do best with a combination of both. Talk to your doctor about the best treatment for you.



what is generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)?

All of us worry about things like health, money or family problems. But people with GAD are extremely worried about these or other things, even when there is little or no reason to worry about them. They are very anxious about just getting through the day. They think things will always go badly. At times, worrying keeps people with GAD from doing everyday tasks.

- ▼ GAD develops slowly. It often starts during the teen years or young adulthood. Symptoms may get better or worse at different times, and often are worse during times of stress.
- ▼ People with GAD may visit a doctor many times before they find out they have this disorder. They ask their doctors to help them with headaches or trouble falling asleep, which can accompany GAD but they don't always get the help they need right away. It may take doctors some time to make a diagnosis for GAD.

what causes GAD?

GAD sometimes runs in families, but no one knows for sure why some people have it and others don't. Researchers have found that several parts of the brain are involved in fear and anxiety. Studies suggest that the extreme worries of GAD may be a way for a person to avoid or ignore some deeper concern. If the person deals with this concern, then the worries of GAD would also disappear. By learning more about fear and anxiety in the brain, scientists may be able to create better treatments. Researchers are also looking for ways in which stress and environmental factors may play a role.

signs and symptoms of GAD



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