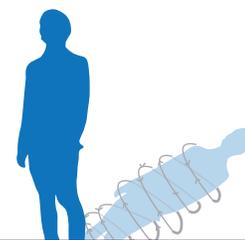


# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

*It's natural to be afraid when you're in danger. It's natural to be upset when something bad happens to you or someone you know. But if you feel afraid and upset weeks or months later, it's time to talk with your doctor. You might have post-traumatic stress disorder.*



About  
8 Million

adults suffer from PTSD  
in a given year

\*U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## when does PTSD start?

PTSD starts at different times for different people. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. Other people develop new or more severe signs months or even years later.

## how can I get better?

PTSD can be treated. A doctor or mental health professional who has experience in treating people with PTSD can help you. Treatment may include "talk" therapy, medication, or both.

Treatment might take 6 to 12 weeks. For some people, it can take longer. Treatment is not the same for everyone. What works for you might not work for someone else.

Drinking alcohol or using other drugs will not help PTSD go away and may make it worse.

To find a provider who can treat PTSD, download the *Accessing Mental Health Care in Maryland* fact sheet at [www.mhamd.org](http://www.mhamd.org). This fact sheet will provide next steps for finding a provider in Maryland.



## what is post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD?

PTSD is an illness that occurs after living through or seeing a dangerous event such as war, natural disasters or violent experiences. PTSD makes you feel stressed and afraid after the danger is over, and re-experience your trauma through recurrent dreams, flashbacks, intrusive memories or unrest in situations that bring back memories of the original trauma.

## who develops PTSD?

PTSD can happen to anyone at any age. Children get PTSD too.

You don't have to be physically hurt to get PTSD. You can get it after you see other people, such as a friend or family member, get hurt. A person is more likely to develop post-traumatic stress if the response to an event involves intense fear, helplessness or horror.

## what causes PTSD?

Living through or seeing something that's upsetting and dangerous can cause PTSD. These experiences can include:

- Death or serious illness of a loved one
- War or combat
- Car accidents and plane crashes
- Hurricanes, tornadoes and fires
- Violent crimes, like a robbery or shooting

There are many other things that can cause PTSD. Talk to your doctor if you are troubled by something that happened to you or someone you care about.

## how do I know if I have PTSD?

Your doctor can help you find out. Call your doctor if you have any of these problems for at least one month:

Suffering from bad dreams

Feeling like the scary event is happening again (flashbacks)

Experiencing scary thoughts you can't control

Staying away from places and things that remind you of what happened

Feeling worried, guilty or sad, or feeling on edge

Sleeping too little or too much

Fighting with loved ones or frequent angry outbursts

Thoughts of hurting yourself or others

Feeling alone

Constant watchfulness, irritability, jumpiness, being easily startled

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