

Making changes to your lifestyle habits will help you eliminate factors that can worsen or maintain your condition. Being mentally healthy will make you feel good about yourself.

For more information or support:

Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada
www.anxietycanada.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association
www.cmha.ca

Anxiety Disorder



Stress and anxiety are a normal part of life. Feeling nervous or anxious before going for an interview or speaking in public is normal, and these feelings, which are linked to a specific event, subside once the event is over. However, if anxiety becomes constant, if the worrying persists long after the stressor has disappeared, or if you feel anxious for no apparent reason, you may be dealing with an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are the most common of all mental health problems.

Causes

Anxiety disorder is usually caused by a combination of factors including biological (genetics), psychological (experiences or perceptions), and environmental (family and work stress). Anxiety can also be

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Guardian

influenced by substance use and abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Symptoms

Individuals with anxiety disorder may experience physical and psychological symptoms of varying degrees, the most common being:

- Hot flashes or chills
- Racing heartbeat
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness
- Muscle pain and tension
- Laboured breathing
- Choking feeling
- Constant worrying
- Sleep disturbances
- Nausea
- Excessive sweating
- Fatigue
- Trembling
- Diarrhea

There are several types of anxiety disorders, but what sets them apart is the nature of the disorder and the intensity and duration of symptoms. Phobias, panic disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder are the most common types of anxiety disorders.

Diagnosis

Anxiety is a disorder that requires a medical diagnosis and treatment. If you think that you or a loved one may be suffering from anxiety, speak to your doctor as they will be able to determine if the cause is physical, or if you are suffering

Treatment

Anxiety disorders can be successfully treated. Treatment usually involves a combination of medication and psychotherapy. The most commonly used medications are antidepressants, which help rebalance brain chemistry, emotions, concentration, and physical symptoms. Anti-anxiety drugs help reduce stress and promote better sleep. Psychotherapy is used to replace anxiety-ridden thoughts and feelings with more rational ones. It also helps understand the origin of the problem and find solutions.

from an anxiety disorder or another health issue that has similar symptoms.

Lifestyle changes can also contribute to alleviating day-to-day stress. Try the following:

- Avoid chocolate and caffeinated beverages like coffee, tea, and soft drinks
- Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs. While they seem to be beneficial at the outset, they can lead to even more anxiety
- Avoid using other stimulants such as other medications. Speak to your pharmacist for more information
- Exercise at least 3 times a week for 30 minutes
- Get enough sleep
- Learn to relax and control your breathing
- Avoid being alone if you are going through a tough time