

Generalized Anxiety Disorder



Worry and nervousness are feelings that we all experience from time to time. Your heart may beat faster, your face may flush, and you may have a sensation of “butterflies” in your stomach. This type of anxiety is healthy; it keeps us from entering or remaining in situations that are dangerous or threatening to our lives. This anxiety is also passing, and usually resolves itself once we’re out of the situation of danger.

Anxiety becomes a problem when you experience excessive worry and nervousness over normal, everyday things, for an extended period of time (usually more than 6 months). People with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) often

fear the worst when it comes to relationships, finances, employment, or health. Their fear is persistent and is not usually realistic, which causes them to experience distress that makes it hard to enjoy life.

GAD is common and can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, and socioeconomic status. While the exact cause of GAD is unknown, a number of factors may contribute to the condition, including your brain chemistry, a buildup of stressful life events, and certain predisposing personality traits.

Symptoms

There are several symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder, including:

- Fatigue
- Sleep difficulties
- Restlessness
- Muscle tension
- Difficulty concentrating and/or focusing



Treatment

Without treatment, the symptoms of GAD may continue to interrupt your quality of life. However, treatment has been proven effective in supporting people with GAD to get back to enjoying life. Here are some next steps to help you get started:

- *Relaxation strategies* can help to decrease the physical symptoms of anxiety. The more you feel your heart racing and your breathing changing, the harder it is to calm yourself down. Try to breathe deeply.
- *Counselling* with a mental health provider has been proven to be very effective in helping individuals overcome anxiety issues. Not only can a trained counsellor help teach you the strategies needed to help stop the anxiety cycle, they can also help you use them correctly.
- Anxiety disorders are generally treated with psychotherapy, medication, or both. You should consult your doctor to choose the treatment that is best for you.

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Sources

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National Institute of Mental Health. (2016). Anxiety disorders. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>

Canadian Mental Health Association. (2016). Anxiety disorders. Retrieved from <https://cmha.ca/mental-health/understanding-mental-illness/anxiety-disorders>

Are You Living with a Mental Health Condition?

- Between chronic joint pain, frequent medical problems, and hospital visits, the bleeding disorders population is susceptible to mental health problems.
- It is important to understand that medical treatment of your hemophilia alone does not automatically translate into better quality of life. Psychosocial support is also an important part of comprehensive care for people with hemophilia.
- The first step is to be aware of the various symptoms of mental health issues that may impact you, as well as possible treatment

strategies. If you feel that you are experiencing a mental health issue, you are not alone. Reach out to your healthcare team and get the support you need to live your best life.

References:

World Federation of Hemophilia. Psychological care for people with hemophilia. Accessed March 3, 2021 at <http://www1.wfh.org/publications/files/pdf-1198.pdf>

National Hemophilia Foundation. Mental Health. Accessed March 3, 2021 at <https://www.hemophilia.org/educational-programs/education/mental-health>