

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress, but it can become a problem when it results in obsessive thoughts, excessive worrying, or uncontrollable fears about everyday events. Very often, people who experience anxiety also have depression - this is true in approximately 75 out of 100 people (75%).

Similar to depression, inherited characteristics, brain chemistry, and environmental factors, such as stressful life events, may all play a role in bringing about an episode of anxiety. Anxiety can be treated successfully through medication, specific types of psychotherapy, or both.

Major types of anxiety disorders include:

- **Panic Disorder** is characterized by unexpected, repeated episodes of intense fear, accompanied by physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate, dizziness, or sweating.
- **Social phobia, or Social Anxiety Disorder**, is characterized by intense, persistent anxiety and self-consciousness that arise in everyday social situations, or even just in anticipating those situations.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** is characterized by recurrent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and/or the compulsion to engage in certain repetitive behaviors or rituals.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** can develop after a terrifying ordeal that involved real or threatened physical harm.
- **Specific Phobia** refers to a fear of specific objects or situations, and the distress when encountering those objects or situations. The primary symptom of phobia is avoidance.

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** involves chronic, excessive worrying about everyday matters. People with GAD often have fatigue, restlessness, insomnia, irritability, and poor concentration.

University of Michigan researchers are actively studying anxiety disorders to understand their causes and interactions with other illnesses. With early diagnosis and early treatment, it is possible that anxiety disorders may be better controlled and less likely to contribute to depression later in life.

For more information:

- University of Michigan Depression Center
- 1-800-475-MICH or 734-936-4400
- <http://www.depressiontoolkit.org>

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