

Help for Anxiety and Panic Disorders

What are generalized anxiety disorder and panic disorder?

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and panic disorder (PD) are mental health disorders that cause anxiety or worry. All of us worry or panic sometimes, but you might have GAD or PD if these feelings often affect your life.

People with GAD tend to worry so much about everyday things that it gets in the way of their daily function. People with GAD often have other symptoms such as:

- Feeling keyed up or on edge
- Tiring easily
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling tense
- Trouble sleeping

People with PD have panic attacks. These involve sudden feelings of fear or anxiety. Sometimes panic attacks happen for a reason, like being in a busy public place, but people with PD can also have a panic attack out of the blue. Panic attacks include at least four of these symptoms:

- Racing heart
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling like you cannot breathe or are choking
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Feeling dizzy or faint

- Chills or hot flashes
- Numbness or tingling
- Feeling that your body or things around you are not real
- Fear of going crazy or losing control
- Fear of dying

How are GAD and PD treated?

It is important to tell your doctor if your symptoms suggest GAD or PD. Some symptoms can also be signs of other serious problems.

Medicine and mental health or talk therapy are the main ways to treat GAD and PD. Many people do best when treated with both medicine and talk therapy. Your doctor might also tell you how to avoid situations that trigger your panic or anxiety. Making lifestyle changes is often helpful. These changes include getting more exercise, drinking less coffee, and getting better sleep. Tell your doctor what medicines you are taking because some medicines can make anxiety worse.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Psychological Association
<https://www.apa.org>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America
<https://www.adaa.org>

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