

“What is wrong with me?
I am just not coping”



You may be struggling with anxiety.

Read further to find out more about anxiety
and its treatment.

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prescription

WHAT IS ANXIETY?



Occasional anxiety is an expected part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or before making an important decision. Having an anxiety disorder involves more than temporary worry or fear; the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. It can be persistent, excessive, seemingly uncontrollable, overwhelming, and disabling. It can also interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships.^{1,2}

WHAT TRIGGERS ANXIETY?



Anxiety is a normal emotional reaction to stress, which is a biological response to a threat. Anxiety helps us get out of harm's way and prepare for important events, and it warns us when we need to take action.²

In people who have an anxiety disorder, the worry is excessive and ongoing.^{1,2}

It can be triggered by any stressor, such as a negative life-event, or even a positive event such as getting married or buying a house.^{1,2}



WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING EXCESSIVE ANXIETY?



The exact cause of excessive anxiety is not known, but researchers have shown that a combination of biological, genetic, cognitive and environmental factors play a role.^{1,2}

Some risk factors include:¹

- Temperamental traits of shyness or behavioral inhibition in childhood
- Exposure to stressful and negative life or environmental events in early childhood or adulthood
- A history of anxiety or other mental illnesses in biological relatives
- Some physical health conditions, such as thyroid problems or heart arrhythmias, or caffeine or other substances/medications, can produce or aggravate anxiety symptoms

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY?¹

Feeling restless, wound-up, or on-edge



Being easily fatigued



Having difficulty concentrating; mind going blank



Being irritable



Having muscle tension



Difficulty controlling feelings of worry



Having sleep problems, such as difficulty falling or staying asleep, restlessness, or unsatisfying sleep



THE TABLE BELOW MAY HELP DISTINGUISH BETWEEN NORMAL ANXIETY AND EXCESSIVE ANXIETY²



NORMAL ANXIETY

Muscle aches or tiredness related overexertion at the gym, a stressful day at work, or sitting too long at the computer

Worry about a work deadline, school exam, or upcoming medical appointment

Difficulty relaxing, sleeping, or concentrating when faced with an illness, job loss, or relationship difficulties



EXCESSIVE ANXIETY

Restlessness, muscle tension, and fatigue that persist for six months or more not related to specific physical or emotional problem

Constant and chronic worry that disrupts social activities and interferes with work, school, family and relationships

Irritability, sleep disturbance, or difficulty concentrating on more days than not for at least six months

HOW IS ANXIETY TREATED?



Consult a healthcare professional or therapist to get a proper diagnosis and to learn about treatment options, length of treatment, side effects, time commitment, and other health issues to help you decide on the best treatment approach for you. Treatment is individualised and may include therapy, medication or both.³

THERAPY



Therapy is aimed at changing your way of thinking, behaving, and reacting to anxiety-producing and fearful objects and situations.¹

ANTI-ANXIETY MEDICATION



Anti-anxiety medication can be prescribed to relieve the symptoms of anxiety.¹

Benzodiazepines have been used for many years and are effective for the treatment of anxiety symptoms, but they also have several drawbacks. Benzodiazepines can cause sedation, tolerance and dependence (addiction) to the medication, as well as affect memory and vigilance.^{1,4,5}

An alternative anti-anxiety medication is just as effective as benzodiazepines in relieving symptoms of anxiety, but unlike benzodiazepines, it does not cause dependence, sedation or memory problems.^{4,6}

Speak to your healthcare provider to find out more about the [non-addictive anti-anxiety treatment options](#) from [Adcock Ingram](#).



ANTI DEPRESSANTS



Antidepressants are used to treat depression, but they can also be helpful for treating anxiety disorders. They may help improve the way your brain uses certain chemicals that control mood or stress.¹

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY



- Join a support group - Many people find it helps to join a support group because they can share their problems and successes with others who are going through the same thing⁸
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, illegal drugs, and some over-the-counter cold medicines, as it can worsen symptoms of anxiety^{8,9}
- Learning how to manage stress will help you to stay calm and focused⁸
- Research suggests that aerobic exercise (like jogging, bicycling and swimming) may be of value⁸
- Learn what triggers your anxiety - keep a journal⁹
- Eat well balanced meals and get enough sleep⁹



Helpful resource websites:

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG): www.sadag.org

Anxiety and Depression Association of America: www.adaa.org

References: 1. The National Institute of Mental Health. Anxiety Disorders [online] July 2018 [cited 21 January 2021]; Available from URL: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml#part_145336 2. Anxiety and Depression Association of America. Generalised Anxiety Disorder Brochure [online] [cited 21 January 2021]; Available from URL: https://adaa.org/sites/default/files/ADAA_GeneralAnxietyDisorderBrochure.pdf 3. Anxiety and Depression Association of America. Treating Anxiety Disorders [online] [cited 21 January 2021]; Available from URL: <https://adaa.org/sites/default/files/Anxiety%20and%20Depression.pdf> 4. Micallef J, Soubrouillard C, Guet F, et al. A double blind parallel group placebo controlled comparison of sedative and amnesic effects of etifoxine and lorazepam in healthy subjects. *Fund Clin Pharmacol* 2001;15:209-217. 5. Outhoff K. The pharmacology of anxiolytics. *SA Fam Pract* 2010;52(2):99-105. 6. Stein DJ. Etifoxine versus alprazolam for the treatment of adjustment disorder with anxiety: a randomized controlled trial. *Adv Ther* 2015;32:57-68. 7. Product approved package insert, July 2006. 8. South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) Anxiety Brochure [online] [cited 21 January 2021]; Available from URL: <http://sadag.org/images/brochures/Anxiety%20Brochure.pdf> 9. Anxiety and Depression Association of America. How to deal with stress and anxiety infographic [online] [cited 21 January 2021]; Available from URL: <https://adaa.org/sites/default/files/Anxiety%20and%20Depression.pdf>