

Conquer Your Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety—these seem to be everyday parts of modern life. It can be hard to keep up with the demands of things like work, school, relationships, financial concerns, parenting and/or taking care of an aging loved one.

Some level of worry and stress is a normal part of daily life. But if stress or anxiety is not relieved, it can cause serious emotional problems. It can also hurt your relationships with your friends, family, and coworkers.

Stress and anxiety are very common. A national survey from the Anxiety Disorders Association of America said that 79% of U.S. workers suffer from some level of stress and anxiety daily.

You may need to seek help if:

- You have feelings of panic, such as dizziness, fast breathing or a racing heartbeat.
- You are unable to work or function at home or at your job.
- You have fears that you cannot control.
- You are having painful memories of a traumatic event.

In this issue of *Your Source*, you will learn how to:

- Recognize the different types of stress and anxiety.
- Identify their signs and symptoms.
- Distinguish helpful levels of stress (“eustress”) from harmful levels (“distress”) that may require treatment.
- Identify ways to keep yourself healthy and work out stress and anxiety in a positive way.

Go Online Today! Log on to access *Stress and Anxiety* and other helpful resources in the *Spotlight* section. Resources include self-assessment tools that can help you measure your level of stress and learn to control it better.

Go Online to Access More Information!



Log on here!



What Are the Different Types of Stress and Anxiety?

An **anxiety disorder** is an extreme level of fear or worry that interferes with normal life. With anxiety disorders, the source of the fear is often not known.

A **stress disorder** is a severe reaction to a specific event or thought. In addition to having physical symptoms, stress disorders can include feeling grouchy, moody, or angry, and having trouble with concentration or memory.

Common anxiety and stress disorders (illnesses) include:

- *Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)*—Excessive worry about everyday issues
- *Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)*—Frequent anxious thoughts or fears (obsessions) that result in repetitive behaviors (compulsions)
- *Panic disorder*—Severe attacks of terror without a specific cause
- *Social anxiety disorder (SAD)*—Avoiding social situations due to extreme worry about being judged or ridiculed
- *Specific phobias*—Intense fear of an object, place, or situation that leads to avoiding the object or situation
- *Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*—A reaction to a terrifying event that keeps returning in frightening memories.

Confronting Stress

Positive or good stress (eustress) can help you get things done, rise to daily challenges, and fire you up to do great work under deadline-type pressure. However, any problem or demand that you consider too much or too frequent a challenge can be a negative “stressor” that takes a toll on you.

Causes of Stress

Most stressors fall into the major categories of social or family events (e.g., marriage, retirement, divorce); job-related issues; educational pressures; health concerns and financial concerns. It’s important to develop healthy ways to respond when you feel stress.

Don’t “Self-Medicating”

For some people, it is tempting to use alcohol or other substances in an attempt to lessen their anxiety symptoms. However, this often does not help, and in fact can trigger a vicious cycle of substance use that can make anxieties worsen over time.

How to Tackle Highly Stressful Situations

While every person’s reaction to a stressful experience is different, it is important to make the effort to find a workable solution to the situation.

You might ask yourself:

- Can you physically change the situation to make it less stressful?
- If the stressor can’t be changed, can you pay less attention to it or “compartmentalize” it?
- Can you lessen the stressor’s negative impact by thinking about more positive ways to look at the situation?
- If the stressor can’t be changed, what other stressors can you change in order to avoid the pileup of stressors?

Treatment Works

When physical symptoms of stress and anxiety are interfering with your daily life, it is important to seek help through your doctor or a mental health professional. Many people have success with combinations of:

1. Learning more about it
2. Talking with a counselor
3. Exercising or walking
4. Doing relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, or time management
5. Taking a medication to help reduce anxiety, only after discussing options with your doctor or mental health professional.

Active treatment can improve your daily life!

Living Healthy Working Well®

What percentage of the American population suffers from social anxiety disorder (SAD)?

- A. Five percent of the population suffers with SAD.
- B. Fifteen percent of the population suffers with SAD.

The correct answer is B. Social anxiety disorder is the most common of the anxiety disorders, with 15 percent of the American population affected by it. The disorder involves a continuing fear of social or performance situations. Causing people to actively avoid such situations, it is more serious than simple shyness.

Now That’s an Idea!

Tips for Coping with Stress

Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet. Don’t use “comfort” eating to ease stress.

Get enough sleep. Make a plan to get in bed earlier if fatigue is adding to your stress.

Get into a regular exercise routine that you can enjoy and sustain. It’s perhaps the best way to cut daily stress.

Limit use of caffeine and alcohol.

Avoid nicotine and recreational drugs.

Learn relaxation techniques like guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, tai chi, or meditation.

Limit your TV news viewing.

Direct energy to active hobbies like playing music, gardening, dancing or crafting.