



Military Pathways™

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FACTS ABOUT ANXIETY DISORDERS

- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older (18.1% of U.S. population).
- Anxiety disorders cost the U.S. \$42 billion a year.
- Anxiety disorders may develop from a complex set of risk factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events.

What is Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)?

GAD is characterized by persistent, excessive, and unrealistic worry about everyday things. People with the disorder, which is also referred to as GAD, experience exaggerated worry and tension, often expecting the worst, even when there is no apparent reason for concern. They anticipate disaster and are overly concerned about money, health, family, work, or other issues. Sometimes just the thought of getting through the day produces anxiety. They don't know how to stop the worry cycle and feel it is beyond their control, even though they usually realize that their anxiety is more intense than the situation warrants. GAD affects 6.8 million adults, or 3.1% of the U.S. population, in any given year.

Physical symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder include the following:

- muscle tension
- fatigue
- restlessness
- difficulty sleeping irritability
- edginess gastrointestinal discomfort or diarrhea

Who suffers from GAD?

Like other anxiety disorders, GAD is treatable. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is effective for many people, helping them to identify, understand, and modify faulty thinking and behavior patterns. This enables people with GAD learn to control their worry. Some with GAD also take medication. Relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, exercise, and other alternative treatments may also become part of a treatment plan. Other anxiety disorders, depression, or substance abuse often accompany GAD, which rarely occurs alone; co-occurring conditions must also be treated with appropriate therapies.

When their anxiety level is mild, people with GAD can function socially and be gainfully employed. Although they may not avoid some situations because they have the disorder, some people can have difficulty carrying out the simplest daily activities when their anxiety is severe.

Source: Anxiety Disorders Association of America



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