

Tip Sheet: Understanding Generalized Anxiety

It's normal to feel anxious from time to time, especially if your life is stressful. However, severe, ongoing anxiety that interferes with day-to-day activities may be a sign of Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

It's possible to develop Generalized Anxiety Disorder as a child or as an adult. Living with Generalized Anxiety Disorder can be a long-term challenge. In many cases, it occurs along with other anxiety or mood disorders.

Symptoms

Generalized Anxiety Disorder symptoms can vary. They can include:

- Constant worrying or obsession about small or large concerns
- Restlessness and feeling keyed up or on edge
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating or your mind "going blank"
- Irritability
- Muscle tension or muscle aches
- Trembling, feeling twitchy or being easily startled
- Trouble sleeping
- Sweating, nausea or diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or rapid heartbeat

There may be times when your worries don't overwhelm you, but you still feel anxious even when there's no apparent reason. For example, you may feel intense worry about your safety or that of your loved ones, or you may have a general sense that something bad is about to happen.

In most cases, Generalized Anxiety Disorder improves with medications or psychological counseling (psychotherapy). Making lifestyle changes, learning coping skills and using relaxation techniques can also help.

Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research