

# Anxiety: A Common Problem

May 2016

## Who Gets Anxiety?

Everyone gets nervous at one time or another. Most of us have had “butterflies” before giving a speech or sweaty palms during job interviews. But when anxiety continues and is experienced on a regular basis, it may be that the individual is suffering from an anxiety disorder.

## What the EAP can do

If you feel you may have symptoms of anxiety, the EAP can evaluate and refer you to a mental health professional in your community. The EAP can also help find resources. To find out more information, call **1-877-313-4455**.

## Resources

- Anxiety Disorders Association of America [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- National Mental Health Association [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)
- [EAP Tips for Overcoming Anxiety](#)

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a powerful feeling characterized by an uncomfortable sense of inner turmoil. People who suffer anxiety often feel like they have lost control over their lives. They may feel irritable, restless, jumpy, and uneasy. Many people with anxiety experience physical symptoms that include rapid or irregular heartbeat, shortness of breath,

dizziness, light-headedness, stomachaches, nausea, headaches, and other pains. They think things like “I can’t do it!” or “What if I make a fool of myself?” Some people think they are going crazy. Others fear they’re going to die.

People with anxiety disorders, and often their loved ones, lose

sleep, miss days of work and school, and drink alcohol or use drugs to control the anxious feelings. When left untreated, those struggling with anxiety tend to isolate themselves from others which can impact family and other relationships. Some develop phobias and other social problems.

## How is Anxiety Treated?

There are five different ways to treat anxiety disorders. Many people choose to combine two or more of the following:

- 1. Self-education** about anxiety helps people feel more normal, promotes healthy behavior/nutrition, and informs about available treatment.
- 2. Psychotherapy** helps people learn ways to cope with anxiety-producing situations and improve family relationships. Research has shown cognitive-behavioral therapy works well in treating anxiety disorders.
- 3. Exercise** helps in many different ways. Just 15-20 minutes of mild aerobic exercise (for example, walking) can reduce anxiety over the entire day.
- 4. Relaxation techniques** such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, or time management help many people.
- 5. Medication** provides rapid relief and can help counseling be more effective. Considered a last resort by many health-conscious patients and doctors, medication can break the cycle of anxiety and significantly improve daily life.