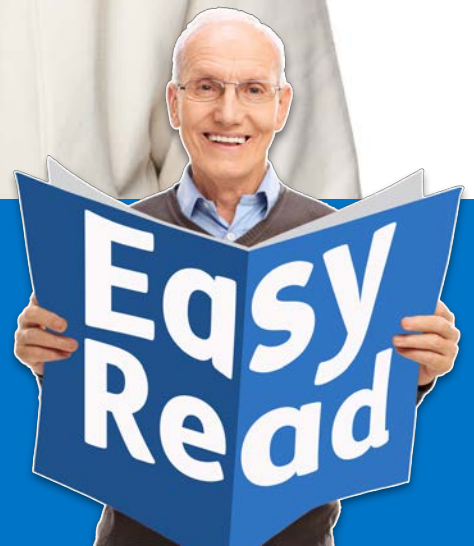


Anxiety



**MindEd
for Families**

online advice and support you can trust

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Anxiety



Anxiety is a mental health condition.

People with anxiety may feel:

- Worried about things that used not to worry them
- Tired, more than usual
- Restless and irritable
- Dread. This is when you feel that something very bad is going to happen
- That they cannot concentrate on anything



They may also suffer from:



- Fast heart beats



- Difficulty with breathing



- Sweating more than usual



- A dry mouth



- Trembling



- Dizziness



- Feeling sick



- A headache



- Difficulty with sleeping



- Tense muscles

Reasons for anxiety in older people



Anxiety in older people can be caused by:

- Having to manage alone when someone has died



- Having a lot of stress - maybe they have to do too much in a short time



- Things that happened in the past - maybe in their childhood



- Having a personality that makes them worry a lot



- A physical illness



- Not being able to do as much as they would like to



- Depression



- Certain medicines



- Certain food and drinks. Too much sugar, and drinks like coffee, tea and cola, can make people feel more anxious



- Loneliness



- Not having a job any more



- Feeling vulnerable because you are getting older

Types of anxiety



Phobias

A phobia is when you are very frightened by something.



Some people have a phobia about snakes or going to the dentist.



Agoraphobia is a fear of open spaces, or of crowded spaces. It can stop people leaving their home.



Social phobia is being frightened of meeting people. You may be afraid that people will think bad things about you.



General anxiety disorder

This is when someone feels anxiety throughout the day for no particular reason.



Panic disorder

This is where you suddenly feel very frightened for no reason.



Obsessive-compulsive disorder

This is when you keep getting the same worrying ideas coming into your mind.



They make you want to do something over and over again.



A classic example is a constant fear of dirt, which makes you clean or wash your hands over and over again.

Post-traumatic stress disorder



This is when someone goes over and over a **traumatic event**.



It can cause a lot of anxiety.



A traumatic event is something that happened to you that was deeply upsetting and disturbing.

Treatment



Your local doctor (GP) will want to check if you have any other health problems that may be causing the anxiety.



They will probably ask you to go for a blood test.



Medications

Your GP may suggest some medication, like:



- Antidepressants. These can work well for anxiety



- Benzodiazepines. These can be useful if the anxiety is really bad.



But they can make you feel sleepy and might make you fall over.

You should only take them for a couple of weeks.



- Beta-blockers. These can be used to help heart problems, but they also help anxiety



- Pregabalin. This is often used to treat epilepsy. It also stops the brain from releasing chemicals that make you feel anxious.



Other treatments

There are other ways that you can help to manage anxiety:

- Deep breathing and relaxation
- Cutting down on coffee, tea and cola
- Talking therapy
- Mindfulness. This is a way of controlling your thoughts and mood by concentrating on what is happening right now

It can be good to find family and friends who support you when you feel anxious.

It helps to do more activities and have a better social life.

For more information



This resource is part of the MindEd online learning site.

For more information please contact:-

Web: www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk

Email: MindEd@rcpsych.ac.uk

Twitter: @MindEdUK



Easy read by easy-read-online.co.uk with help from [Mencap Liverpool](#)