

Anxiety

Anxiety can be an unpleasant emotional state ranging from mild unease to intense fear. There can be a feeling of impending doom, although there is no obvious threat, and it has certain physical and psychological symptoms. A certain amount of anxiety is normal and serves as a motivator and helps us improve our performance. Anxiety becomes a problem, however, when it starts to inhibit thought and disrupts behavior and normal life activities. Some clues that anxiety has gotten out of hand are excessive worry that lasts a period of at least 6 months, restlessness, being easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, disturbed sleep, changes in appetite, diarrhea, ulcers, acid reflux and/or nausea. Remember that from time to time we may all experience these symptoms, but anxiety needs to be treated when the intensity, duration or frequency of the anxiety and worry is far out of proportion to the actual likelihood or impact of the feared events.

Your Personal Evaluation of Anxiety

Instructions

Answer "Yes" or "No" to the following questions. If you answer more Yes's than No's, it may be a good idea to seek the advice of a professional.

1. My feelings of anxiety and worry occur more days than not and have lasted for at least 6 months.
2. I worry about a number of events such as my performance at school or work, whether I'm going to be late for appointments, bills, relationships with family/friends, how I look, if people like me.
3. I have trouble controlling my worries and they tend to run away with me.
4. My anxiety and worry are associated with three or more of the following symptoms. (NOTE: only one item is required in children.)
 - Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge
 - Being easily fatigued
 - Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank
 - Irritability
 - Muscle tension
 - Sleep disturbance (can't fall asleep, staying asleep is difficult, or restlessness unsatisfying sleep)
5. My worries or physical symptoms cause significant distress or impairment in my social and occupational/school life.
6. My distress is not due to the direct effects of a substance (e.g. alcohol use, drug use, over the counter drugs).