

Background

How can you tell the difference between normal, healthy worry and an anxiety disorder? A person with anxiety disorder may feel worried or anxious about a general topic, instead of a specific event. Another sign that worry has become an anxiety disorder is a lack of problem-solving skills. When a healthy teen is worried about a test, she may be prompted to solve the problem by studying more or asking for a tutor. A teen with anxiety disorder can become overwhelmed with worry and fear of the test. In this mental state, he is unable to think of problem-solving steps. At times, worry can interfere with someone's ability to function at school or work and maintain relationships. If this happens, it is a signal to see a behavioral health care professional.

Anxiety can also have physical symptoms. These symptoms often mimic a heart attack—pounding or rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, numbness, and nausea. The symptoms of an anxiety attack and heart attack are similar. It can be difficult to know what kind of help to provide. If you are near someone experiencing these symptoms, it is best to call 911 right away.



Did you know?

“Anxiety disorder” is a broad term that covers many conditions. Examples include panic disorder, phobic disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know would like to read more about anxiety, see if your school or public library has these books:

Mindfulness for Teen Anxiety: A Workbook for Overcoming Anxiety at Home, at School, and Everywhere by Christopher Willard, PhD.

The Anxiety Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Anxiety and Worry by Lisa M. Schab, LCSW.

What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner, PhD.

