

We all have feelings of anxiety at some point and feel anxious or worried about a particular event in our lives.

Some people find it harder to control such worries. Their anxiety can be longer term becoming a condition where they feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than just one specific event.

This is known as Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD). The information here is drawn from sources of help and support for anxiety and panic attacks, much of which is available from the NHS at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder)

## DID YOU KNOW

Anxiety is the main symptom of conditions including;

- Panic attacks
- Phobias
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Social anxiety disorder

## WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

Research suggest several factors play a role in causing anxiety;

- Over activity in the brain in areas involved with emotions and behaviour.
- Imbalances in brain chemicals involved in the regulation of mood.
- Genetics. Sometimes it is more likely if a close relative has the condition.
- A history of stressful or traumatic experiences.
- Having a painful long term health condition.
- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol.

## FOCUSED ON ANXIETY



### GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

People with GAD may feel anxious on most days. As soon as one anxious thought is resolved another may start to worry them.

Such anxiety can then cause both mental and physical symptoms which will vary person to person. They can include trouble concentrating or sleeping, dizziness or heart palpitations.

If this begins to affect someone's daily life they should consult their GP for advice.

Panic attacks are one of the more severe effects of anxiety. They can occur when the body experiences a rush of intense mental and physical symptoms. They can include shortness of breath, a racing heartbeat, chest pain, nausea, and tingling in the fingers amongst other symptoms.

It is worth taking some time to be mindful of your own triggers for anxiety. Think about what makes you anxious and form some of your own strategies for resilience.

### HOW IS ANXIETY TREATED OR AVOIDED?

There are a number of ways in which anxiety can be treated.

You may have heard of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy which is a talking therapy. You can refer yourself directly to a psychological therapies service in your area with or without seeing your GP.

There are also many other things you can do for yourself if medication or talking therapies are not the answer for you.

- Learn some breathing and relaxation techniques.
- Exercise regularly and stop smoking if you can.
- Cut down the amount of alcohol or coffee you drink.
- Try one of the mental health apps and tools recommended by the NHS and charities like MIND.

### MINDFULNESS

Paying more attention to the present moment, to thoughts and feelings and the world around you, can be a strategy to improve your mental health.

Mindfulness is said to help deal with our unhelpful thoughts and worries by helping put them into perspective. It is perhaps not for everyone but for some it may be useful to check out this technique.

### TIPS TO RELAX

The charity MIND has a wealth of information on their website including videos on the subject of relaxation, which is just one part of managing mental health and coping with stress and anxiety.

See [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation). There is also a link to pages specifically for those coping with student life.