

Anxiety *At a Glance*



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling that everyone experiences at one time or another. It can help us stay safe. For some children and teens worries may become too big. It is like a smoke detector going off when there is no fire. When worries become so big that it is hard for a child to play, learn, or enjoy life, they may have an anxiety disorder.

Onset & Causes

There is no single cause. Anxiety can run in families, with children sometimes copying the worries they observe in adults. Some children also display a naturally anxious temperament from an early age.



How does anxiety affect kids?

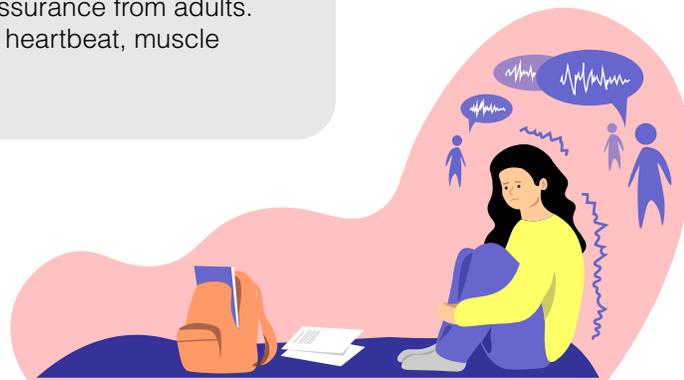
Without help, anxiety can interfere with school and social relationships with friends/peers. It may also contribute to secondary issues, such as sadness or the development of unhealthy coping strategies.

What are the symptoms?

Children with anxiety may experience worry about a variety of situations, such as being separated from parents or caregivers, making mistakes, school performance, health, insects, vaccinations, germs, or bad things happening to themselves or loved ones. Some children may engage in repetitive behaviors, such as checking or redoing tasks. Anxiety can lead to avoidance of school or other activities and an increased need for reassurance from adults. Physical symptoms may include headaches, stomach aches, a rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, or difficulties with sleep and appetite.

How is anxiety diagnosed and treated?

Anxiety can be diagnosed and treated by psychotherapists, behavioral pediatricians, psychiatrists, and pediatric providers with specific training. Standardized questionnaires, history, and observations are used to make a diagnosis. Behavioral therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy are useful for children and their parents. Some children also take medicine as prescribed by trained providers. Most children get much better with treatment.



Diet & Supplements

A healthy diet supports mood, but no specific diet treats anxiety. Some vitamin and mineral deficiencies may impact mood. Limiting caffeine may help some children. It is best to consult your child's physician regarding nutritional needs.

Questions to ask your doctor

- Does my child or teen have an anxiety disorder?
- Should my child start therapy?
- Are medications recommended?

Scan QR codes to explore resources.

HealthyChildren.org



Child Mind Institute



American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

