

Common symptoms of anxiety and depression

The following lists summarise some of the common symptoms of anxiety and depression. Many of these are everyday problems for us all. If you have a lot of the symptoms and have done so for a few weeks or more, and they are really interfering with your life in general, then you may be suffering from anxiety and/or depression.

Anxiety symptoms

- Feeling worried all the time
- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Bad dreams
- Unable to sleep
- Difficulty concentrating, poor memory
- Racing heartbeat
- Sweating
- Muscle tension and pains
- Shaking
- Breathing heavily
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Indigestion or diarrhoea

If you are anxious already, the physical symptoms can make you worry they are signs of a serious illness. This can make you even more anxious.

Panic symptoms

- Sudden and overwhelming fear and sense of loss of control, weakness
- Breathing quickly
- Increased pounding heartbeat
- Sweating
- With a bad panic attack, you may feel that you are going to die

Phobic symptoms

- A phobia is strong feeling of anxiety in situations that frighten you. For example, if you have a phobia of people, you feel anxious when there are people around, but feel fine at other times.
- You tend to avoid the situations that make you anxious - but this makes the phobia worse as time goes on.
- Your life gets taken over by the things you have to do to avoid such situations.
- You realise that there is no real danger and may even feel silly about your phobia, but still can't control it.

Anxiety and panic are often accompanied by feelings of depression, losing your appetite, or seeing the future as bleak and hopeless.

Depression symptoms (from <http://www.wingofmadness.com/>)

- Things just seem “off” or “wrong.”
- You don’t feel hopeful or happy about anything in your life.
- You’re crying a lot for no apparent reason, either at nothing, or something that normally would be insignificant.
- You feel like you’re moving (and thinking) in slow motion.
- Getting up in the morning requires a lot of effort.
- Carrying on a normal conversation is a struggle. You can’t seem to express yourself.
- You’re having trouble making simple decisions.
- Your friends and family **really** irritate you.
- You’re not sure if you still love your spouse/significant other.
- Smiling feels stiff and awkward. It’s like your smiling muscles are frozen.
- It seems like there’s a glass wall between you and the rest of the world.
- You’re forgetful, and it’s very difficult to concentrate on anything.
- You’re anxious and worried a lot.
- Everything seems hopeless.
- You feel like you can’t do anything right.
- You have recurring thoughts of death and/or suicidal impulses. Suicide seems like a welcome relief.
- You have a feeling of impending doom - you think something bad is going to happen, although you may not be sure what, and/or...
- ...You have a very specific fear that torments you constantly.
- In your perception of the world around you, it’s always cloudy. Even on sunny days, it seems cloudy and gray.
- You feel as though you’re drowning or suffocating.
- You’re agitated, jumpy and and anxious much of the time.
- Your senses seem dulled; food tastes bland and uninteresting, music doesn’t seem to affect you, you don’t bother smelling flowers anymore.
- Incessantly and uncontrollably into your mind comes the memory of every failure, every bad or uncomfortable experience, interview or date, like a torrent of negativity.

If, after reading the above you think you may be suffering from anxiety and/or depression then you should speak to your GP. May of the above symptoms are also caused by medical problems including anaemia, thyroid problems and vitamin D Deficiency. Your doctor will be able to help you think through your problems, consider medical causes and help you plan treatment.

You may also wish to look at some of the recommended resources on the information sheet ‘Some Recommended Mental health Resources’