



Social anxiety disorder (social phobia):

Social anxiety disorder, also named as social phobia, is a type of anxiety disorder that causes extreme fear in social settings. People with this disorder have trouble talking to people, meeting new people, and attending social gatherings. They fear being judged by others. They may understand that their fears are irrational or unreasonable, however, they can't overcome this fear.

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Symptoms:

- Blushing
- Nausea
- Excessive sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Difficulty speaking
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Rapid heart rate

Causes:

The exact cause of social phobia is still unknown, however, negative experiences like bullying, family conflict, sexual or emotional abuse may contribute to this disorder.

Physical abnormalities like serotonin imbalance may cause this condition. Serotonin is a chemical in the brain that helps regulate mood. An overactive amygdala (a structure in the brain that controls fear response and feelings or thoughts of anxiety) may also cause these disorders.



Diagnosis:

The health care provider will want to determine whether other conditions may be causing your anxiety or if you have social anxiety disorder along with another physical or mental health disorder.

The diagnosis based on:

- Physical exam to help assess whether any medical condition or medication may trigger symptoms of anxiety
- Discussion of the symptoms, how often they occur and in what situations
- Review of a list of situations to see if they make you anxious
- Self-report questionnaires about symptoms of social anxiety

Treatment:

There are different treatments available for social anxiety.

The main options are:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with a therapist, which is therapy that helps you identify negative thought patterns and behaviors, and change them. This can be done with just you and a therapist.
- Guided self-help, which involves working through a CBT-based workbook or online course with regular support from a therapist.
- Antidepressant medicines, usually a type of medicine called a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). These are usually not used to treat people under the age of 15.

CBT is generally considered the best treatment, but other treatments may help if it does not work or you do not want to try it.



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