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What is Anxiety?

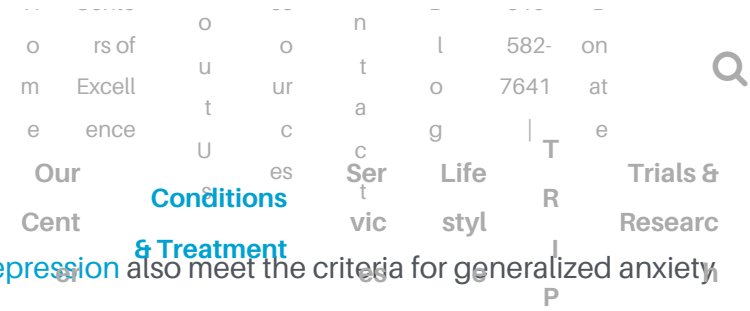
Anxiety is a mental health condition characterized by excessive and persistent feelings of fear, worry, or unease. Anxiety disorders encompass a wide range of conditions, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias. These disorders are typically associated with significant distress and impairment in daily functioning.

Individuals with anxiety disorders often experience symptoms such as excessive worrying, restlessness, irritability, difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances. Anxiety can manifest physically as well, leading to symptoms like rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, sweating, trembling, and gastrointestinal discomfort.

Anxiety disorders can also be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and neurological factors. Imbalances in certain neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), are thought to play a role in the development of anxiety disorders.

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CONTINUE



Older patients who experience major [depression](#) also meet the criteria for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) in more than 50% of the cases. In addition, some older persons meet the criteria for panic disorder.

Anxiety symptoms may be secondary to appropriate fear in threatening situations.

- Older adults living in urban settings often fear being attacked as they walk the streets.
- Those with memory loss who live alone may fear that they will get lost driving to the doctor's office.
- Individuals who have lost the acuteness of their reflexes fear driving on busy, crowded highways.

Medical causes of anxiety in older adults

- Hyperthyroidism
- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Pulmonary emboli
- Hypoglycemia
- Medications
- Caffeine
- Over-the-counter sympathomimetic drugs
- Anticholinergic agents
- Withdrawal from anti-anxiety medications

People with anxiety can also experience panic attacks. This is a discrete period of intense fear or discomfort, in which four (or more) of the following symptoms developed abruptly and reached a peak within 10 minutes:

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• DIZZINESS

- Parasthesias (numbness/tingling)
- Hot/cold waves

Fear:

- of Dying
- of Going Crazy
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Derealization/Depersonalization

Psychedelic-assisted therapy

Depression and anxiety can affect everyone and may manifest in [addiction disorders](#) to alcohol, drugs or prescription medications. [Dr. Keith Heinzerling](#) is an addiction medicine specialist who treats adults of all ages. Patients with depression, anxiety, PTSD, end-of-life distress, chronic pain, drug/alcohol problems, and other conditions may be eligible for psychedelic-assisted [therapy with ketamine](#).

Resources

- [Anxiety & Depression Association of America](#)

Our geriatric psychiatrist, [Dr. David Merrill](#), offers kind, compassionate, thorough clinical evaluations and follows depression treatment guidelines, helping the patient to stay connected with the activities and people who matter to them. Contact us at [310-582-7641](#) to schedule a consultation.

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Contact Us

For a consultation or second opinion, Call us at 310-582-7641

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Brain Health Center Overview

 [PLAY VIDEO](#)



Written and reviewed by:

[The Pacific Neuroscience medical and editorial team](#)

We are a highly specialized team of medical professionals with extensive neurological and cranial disorder knowledge, expertise and writing experience.

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Useful Links

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