

Anxiety

Basic Facts

Many things cause people to feel anxious so stress is a normal part of life. A little anxiety can be good. For example, if a person has a project to finish, stress can help them focus and finish the job.

Too much stress can cause a person to have trouble doing daily activities and enjoying life. An anxiety disorder happens when a person has too much worry that lasts a long time or gets worse over time.

People may get disorders during stressful events such as a serious illness, financial problems, or the loss of a loved one. Diseases of the heart and lungs often cause anxiety. For example, up to 40 percent of people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD, a type of lung disease) have anxiety.

Anxiety also can happen with depression.

Up to 15 percent of older adults living in the community have anxiety disorders. Screening for anxiety in older adults is important in primary care and hospital settings.

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