

# Do you worry all the time?

A REAL ILLNESS

Generalized  
Anxiety Disorder (GAD)



# Does This Sound Like You?

Do you worry all the time? Please put a check in the box next to any problems you have had often over the last six months.

- I never stop worrying about things big and small.
- I have headaches and other aches and pains for no reason.
- I am tense a lot and have trouble relaxing.
- I have trouble keeping my mind on one thing.
- I get crabby or grouchy.
- I have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.
- I sweat and have hot flashes.
- I sometimes have a lump in my throat or feel like I need to throw up when I am worried.

If you put a check in the box next to some of these problems, you may have **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)**.

# GAD is a **real** illness that needs to be treated.

It's not your fault if you have this illness,  
and you don't have to suffer.

Read this booklet and learn how to get help.  
You **can** feel better and get your life back!

# 1. What is Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)?

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a real illness. GAD can be treated with medicine and therapy.

If you have GAD, you worry all the time about your family, health, or work, even when there are no signs of trouble. Sometimes you aren't worried about anything special, but feel tense and worried all day long. You also have aches and pains for no reason and feel tired a lot.

Everyone gets worried sometimes, but if you have GAD, you stay worried, fear the worst will happen, and cannot relax.

## 2. When does GAD start and how long does it last?

Most often GAD starts when a person is still a child or teenager. It can start in an adult too. More women than men have this illness.

People with GAD may visit their doctor many times before they find out what their real illness is. They ask their doctor to help them with the signs of GAD like headaches or trouble falling asleep, but don't get help for the illness itself.

## 3. Am I the only one with this illness?

No. You are not alone. In any year, 4 million Americans have GAD.

## 4. What can I do to help myself?

- **Talk to your doctor about your constant worry and tension.** Tell your doctor about any other signs of GAD that you may have, such as aches and pains for no reason or trouble sleeping. Tell your doctor if these problems keep you from doing everyday things and living your life. You may want to show your doctor this booklet. It can help you explain how you feel. Ask your doctor for a checkup to make sure you don't have a different illness.
- **Ask your doctor if he or she has helped other people with GAD.** Special training helps doctors treat people with GAD. If your doctor doesn't have special training, ask for the name of a doctor or counselor who does.
- **Get more information.** Call 1-88-88-ANXIETY to have free information mailed to you.

You **can**  
feel  
better.

# 5. What can a doctor or counselor do to help me?

- The doctor may give you medicine. But it may take a few weeks for the medicine to work.
- Talking to a specially trained doctor or counselor helps many people with GAD. This is called “therapy.” Therapy can help you learn to deal with your worries.



# Here is one person's story:

"I was worried all the time, about everything. It didn't matter that there were no signs of problems, I just got upset. I was having trouble falling asleep at night, and I couldn't keep my mind focused at work. I felt angry at my family all the time.



"Finally, I saw my doctor and explained about my constant worries. My doctor sent me to someone who knows about



GAD. Now I am taking medicine and working with a counselor to cope better with my worries. I had to work hard, but I feel better. I'm glad I made that first call to my doctor."

# Remember – you can get help now:

- Talk to your doctor about your fears and worries.
- Call 1-88-88-ANXIETY (1-888-826-9438). It is a free call.  
You will get free information about GAD mailed to you.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is part of the Federal government. NIMH conducts medical research to find new and better ways to prevent and treat mental illnesses. NIMH also provides free information about mental illnesses.

To get free information about other mental illnesses, write to NIMH at:  
National Institute of Mental Health  
6001 Executive Boulevard  
Room 8184, MSC 9663  
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663

You can also find free NIMH information online at:  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>



This is the electronic version of a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) publication, available from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/index.cfm>. To order a print copy, call the NIMH Information Center at 301-443-4513 or 1-866-615-6464 (toll-free). Visit the NIMH Web site (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>) for information that supplements this publication.

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