



Childhood Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Many children have strong fears different times during development. For example, toddlers are often very distressed about being away from their parents, even if they are safe and cared for. When children do not outgrow the fears and worries that are typical in young children, or when there are so many fears and worries that they interfere with school, home, or play activities, the child may be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.



What are some of the signs of ADD?



Examples of different types of anxiety disorders include:

- Being very afraid when away from parents (separation anxiety)
- Having extreme fear about a specific thing or situation, such as dogs, insects, or going to the doctor (phobias)
- Being very afraid of school and other places where there are people (social anxiety)
- Being very worried about the future and about bad things happening (general anxiety)
- Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected, intense fear that come with symptoms like heart pounding, having trouble breathing, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty (panic disorder)

Anxiety may present as fear or worry, but can also make children irritable and angry. Anxiety symptoms can also include trouble sleeping, as well as physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches, or stomachaches. Some anxious children keep their worries to themselves and, thus, the symptoms can be missed.

What can parents do if they think their child may have an Anxiety Disorder?

The first step to treatment is to talk with a healthcare provider, such as a primary care provider or a mental health specialist, about getting an evaluation. A mental health professional can develop a therapy plan that works best for the child and family. For very young children, involving parents in treatment is key; the school can also be included in the treatment plan. Consultation with a healthcare provider can help determine if medication should be part of the treatment.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020 Anxiety & Depression in Children 032020
National Institute of Mental Health, 2018