



When worrying is worrisome

There's an old cautionary phrase, "You're going to worry yourself sick." It's often said with a bit of exaggeration. But it's closer to the truth than some people might guess.

Generalized anxiety disorder, or chronic, excessive worry about routine, everyday things, affects 6.8 million Americans each year, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Symptoms can range from a general feeling of uneasiness to episodes of outright panic. Anxiety disorders can disrupt your sleep, interfere with your work and social life—even make you physically ill.

So, yes, you can be worried sick. Fortunately, effective treatments for

anxiety disorder can put you back on the road to wellness.

Excessive anxiety A new job. A final exam. A loved one in the hospital.

Situations like these would raise most people's anxiety levels a few notches. And if you ask them what is worrying them, they'd be able to tell you.

When you have generalized anxiety disorder, however, the cause for worry is less precise. You worry about your family, your health, the car, and the house. You worry when things aren't going well. You continue worrying after they improve.

Such chronic anxiety for six months or more suggests an anxiety disorder, says Mental

Health America (MHA).

Other symptoms might include:

- Chronic tension and irritability
- Restlessness and trouble sleeping
- Headaches and muscle tension
- Fatigue

Getting help The most effective therapy for any anxiety disorder is a combination of medication and psychotherapy, according to MHA.

Your doctor might prescribe one of several anti-anxiety medications. He or she also might refer you to a therapist who specializes in treating anxiety disorder.



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