

Educational Links (English):

- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/ptsdkeyfacts.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/copingaftertraumaticevent.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/parents/carers/traumaticstressinchildren.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/youngpeople/whenbadthingshappen.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/youngpeople/copingwithstress.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/feelingstressed.aspx>
- ❖ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>
- ❖ <https://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>
- ❖ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/basics/definition/con-20022540>
- ❖ <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/treatment/therapy-med/prolonged-exposure-therapy.asp>



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Educational Booklet: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Fear and anxiety are part of life. A person may feel anxious before taking an exam or walking down a dark street. This type of anxiety is useful because it allows us to be more alert or more careful. It usually ends shortly after it comes out of the situation that caused it.

However, for many people anxiety does not go away and worsens over time thus developing anxiety disorders.

Unlike relatively mild and transient anxiety caused by a stressful event, anxiety disorders last at least six months and can get worse if left untreated.

Different anxiety disorders include:

- ❖ Panic disorder
- ❖ Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ❖ Post-traumatic stress disorder
- ❖ Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder)
- ❖ Specific phobias
- ❖ Generalized anxiety disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Post-traumatic stress disorder develops after a terrifying experience involving physical harm or the threat of physical harm. The person who develops it may be the person who was affected, or the person may have witnessed a traumatic event that happened to another. Symptoms may occur immediately after trauma or may take months or years after the event has occurred.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms:

- ❖ "Revived" episodes, where the event seems to be happening again and again
- ❖ Repeated and distressing memories of the situation
- ❖ Repetitive dreams of what happened
- ❖ Physical reactions to situations that remind you of the traumatic event
- ❖ Emotional bluntness or giving the impression that you don't care
- ❖ Feelings of carelessness and indifference
- ❖ Inability to remember important aspects of trauma
- ❖ Lack of interest in normal activities
- ❖ Less expression of moods
- ❖ Isolation of people, places or objects that remind you of the event
- ❖ Feeling an uncertain future
- ❖ Difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Overreaction to stimuli that cause shock
- ❖ Hypervigilance
- ❖ Irritability or fits of rage
- ❖ Difficulty sleeping

Studies indicate that...

- ❖ The cause of post-traumatic stress disorder is unknown, but there are psychological, genetic, physical and social factors involved.
- ❖ It can happen at any age, even in childhood.
- ❖ Women are more likely than men to develop post-traumatic stress disorder.
- ❖ Susceptibility to the disorder can be inherited.
- ❖ The disorder is often accompanied by depression, another anxiety disorder, or substance abuse, such as alcohol.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Course

Not all traumatized people develop post-traumatic stress disorder. If it develops, the evolution of the disease is variable. Some people may recover after six months, while others have symptoms that last long for much longer. In some people, the disease becomes chronic.

Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Medications and psychotherapies generally treat the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder very effectively.

- ❖ **Medications** - Antidepressants, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, can be effective in treating post-traumatic stress disorder.
- ❖ **Psychotherapy** - Psychotherapeutic treatment is oriented to the reduction of symptoms, encouraging you to remember the fact, express your feelings and gradually acquire some sense of control over the experience. Support groups, where people who have had similar experiences share their feelings, are helpful.

Remember:

- ❖ If you think you have an anxiety disorder, the first person you should consult is your doctor. A doctor will be able to determine whether the symptoms that alarm you are due to an anxiety disorder, another medical condition, or both.
- ❖ If an anxiety disorder is diagnosed, the next step is usually to consult a mental health professional.
- ❖ Once you start medicines, it is important not to abruptly discontinue them. Certain medications should be reduced gradually under the supervision of a doctor or negative reactions may occur.
- ❖ Many people with anxiety disorders benefit from joining a self-help or support group and sharing their problems and accomplishments with others.
- ❖ Stress management and meditation techniques can help you calm down and can improve the effects of therapy.
- ❖ Aerobic exercises can have a calming effect.
- ❖ Caffeine, illegal drugs, and even some unprescribed cold medications should be avoided as they can aggravate symptoms of anxiety disorders.
- ❖ Your family or friends can be a great source of support.

For questions or concerns, discuss it with your doctor.