

ANXIETY AND PHOBIAS

Anxiety disorders are quite common, affecting about 5% of the population at any one time, but many people do not seek help. Anxiety and fear are normal human emotions and are often found as reactions to stress. However, normal anxiety becomes abnormal when the symptoms are so intense that people are stopped from coping well with day-to-day activities because they are so painful and distressing. Abnormal fears, sometimes called phobias, are intense fears of things that would not make the average person frightened.

People who suffer from abnormal anxiety find it difficult to concentrate, tend to sleep badly and get tired easily. The body shows the effects of anxiety by increased heart rates, tension and pain in muscles, inability to relax, sweating, over breathing, dizziness, faintness and bowel disturbances. Sudden unexpected surges of anxiety are called panic attacks. Someone who has a phobia has symptoms of intense anxiety or panic but only in particular situations. Phobias lead to avoidance of the things that are feared.

Treatment