Anxiety

What is anxiety?

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. An estimated 40 million adults in the U.S., or 18%, have an anxiety disorder. Approximately 8% of children and teenagers experience the negative impact of an anxiety disorder at school and at home. Most people develop symptoms of anxiety disorders before age 21 and women are 60% more likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder than men.

The symptoms of anxiety disorders include:

Anxiety disorders are a group of related conditions, each with unique symptoms. However, all anxiety disorders have one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are <u>not</u> threatening. People can experience one or more of the following symptoms:

Emotional symptoms:
- Feelings of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense and jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger

Physical symptoms:
- Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath
- Upset stomach
- Sweating, tremors and twitches
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
- Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

Types of anxiety disorders:

- General Anxiety Disorder - People with generalized anxiety disorder display excessive anxiety or worry for months and face several anxiety-related symptoms.
- Panic Disorder - People with panic disorder have recurrent unexpected panic attacks, which are sudden periods of intense fear that may include palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate; sweating; trembling or shaking; sensations of shortness of breath, smothering, or choking; and feeling of impending doom.
- Social Anxiety Disorder - People with social anxiety disorder (sometimes called "social phobia") have a marked fear of social or performance situations in which they expect to feel embarrassed, judged, rejected, or fearful of offending others.

How are anxiety disorders treated?

There are 2 basic types of treatment for anxiety disorders:
1. Medications
2. Psychotherapy