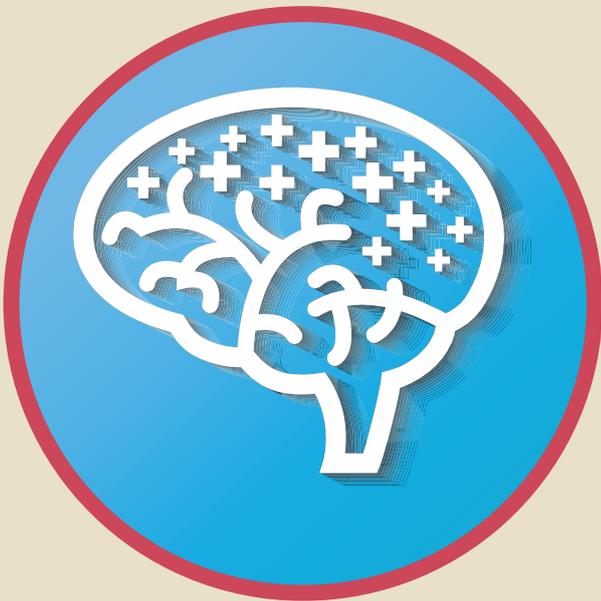


**M.I.N.D**

**GAD**



### Generalized Anxiety Disorder

#### Introduction

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (or GAD) is characterized by excessive and exaggerated anxiety about everyday life with no obvious reasons for worry. People with generalized anxiety disorder always expect disaster and cannot stop worrying about health, money, family, work, or school. In people with GAD, the worry is often unrealistic or out of proportion for the situation. Daily life becomes a constant state of worry and fear and the anxiety interferes with daily functioning, including work, school, social activities, and relationships.

#### Overview and facts

**It is important to know that you are not alone.**

According to the research done by IDRAAC, 2 out of 100 Lebanese (2% of the Lebanese population) will have Generalized Anxiety Disorder at some point in their lives. However, Lebanese people can wait up to 28 years before seeking any consultation for their anxiety disorders.

#### Symptoms

Symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder include:

- Excessive, constant worry and tension
- An unrealistic view of problems
- Restlessness or a feeling of being on the edge
- Low concentration or difficulty concentrating
- Being easily alarmed
- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Trembling or shaking
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Trouble falling or staying asleep

In addition, people with GAD often have other anxiety disorders (such as panic disorder or phobias), obsessive-compulsive disorder, clinical depression, or additional problems with drug or alcohol misuse.

**Consult a doctor if:**

- You feel like you are worrying too much and it is interfering with your work, relationships or other parts of your life
- You feel depressed, or have other mental health concerns along with anxiety
- You are using alcohol or drugs to (treat) yourself
- You have suicidal thoughts or behaviors

Your worries may not go away on their own, and they may actually get worse over time if you don't seek help. See your doctor or a mental health provider before your anxiety gets worse. It may be easier to treat if you address it early.

### Causes and Risk Factors

The cause of GAD is not fully known, but a number of factors seem to be associated with it:

- **Genetics:** Some research suggests that family history plays a part in increasing the likelihood that a person will develop GAD.
- **Brain chemistry:** GAD has been associated with abnormal functioning of certain neurological pathways that connect particular brain regions involved in thinking and emotion. If the pathways that connect brain regions do not run efficiently, problems related to mood or anxiety may result. These pathways depend on chemicals called neurotransmitters that transmit information between nerve cells.
- **Environmental factors:** Negative life events such as trauma, abuse, the death of a loved one, divorce, changing jobs or schools, may lead to GAD.

### Test and Diagnosis

To diagnose an anxiety disorder, a person should consult a mental health professional who will rely on scientific criteria to check whether he/she has an anxiety disorder. GAD is diagnosed if symptoms are present for more days than not during a period of at least six months. The symptoms also must interfere with daily living, such as causing you to miss work or school. The doctor will perform a full examination including a mental health assessment. Also, lab tests can be ordered to rule out other conditions that can cause similar symptoms. This is called a mental health assessment. Your doctor may also do blood or urine tests to rule out other conditions, that can cause similar symptoms.

### Treatment

The main treatments for **anxiety disorders** are:

- Psychotherapy which involves working with a therapist to reduce anxiety symptoms. Cognitive behavioral therapy is one of the most effective forms of psychotherapy for anxiety disorders. Generally a short-term treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy focuses on teaching you specific skills to gradually return to the activities you have avoided because of anxiety. Through this process, your symptoms improve as you build upon your initial success.
- Medication such as anxiolytics, antidepressants or sedatives.
  - Antidepressants: which influence the activity of brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) thought to play a role in anxiety disorders.
  - Buspirone: which is an anti-anxiety medication that may be used on an ongoing basis.
  - Benzodiazepines: in some cases, these sedatives may be prescribed for relief of anxiety symptoms.

You may begin to feel better in about 1 to 3 weeks after you start taking medicine. But it can take as long as 6 to 8 weeks to see more improvement. If you have concerns about your medicine, or if you do not start to feel better by 3 weeks, talk to your doctor. He or she may increase the dose or change to a different medicine.

- Combination of psychotherapy and medication

## Sources and Links

[www.idraac.org](http://www.idraac.org)

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)