



Anxiety/Depression FAQs

1. What is anxiety?

You may feel like you are spending a lot of time worrying. Your worrying may feel out of control. It can happen during a life event or happen randomly. You may experience feeling nervous, restless or tense; having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom; having an increased heart rate; breathing rapidly; sweating or trembling; feeling weak or tired; trouble concentrating; trouble sleeping; or stomachaches and headaches. Talk to your provider about your symptoms. ¹

2. What is depression?

You may feel sad and no longer like to do the things you used to enjoy. You may have angry outbursts or frustration, sleep too much or too little; be tired or have no energy; eat too much or too little; have a hard time concentrating; have feelings of worthlessness; have thoughts of death; or have back pain and headaches. Talk to your provider about your symptoms. ²

3. I think I just worry too much. Should I tell my healthcare provider?

Yes. If you think that you worry too much, tell your healthcare provider. You may worry about getting help and that can delay treatment.

If you are pregnant, finding ways to lower your levels of anxiety can help you have a healthy pregnancy. Talk to your provider about your symptoms to help keep you and your baby healthy during and after your pregnancy. ³

4. I have anxiety or depression and I'm planning on getting pregnant. Is there anything I need to know?

Yes. Talk to your healthcare providers about your plans to become pregnant. This will allow your healthcare providers to review your current health plan. ³

5. Can I breastfeed if I have anxiety or depression and need to take medication?

Having anxiety or depression does not need to keep you from breastfeeding. For some people with anxiety or depression, breastfeeding can feel overwhelming. Find supportive friends or family members who can help you through the process. If you and your healthcare provider decide that medication is the best route for you, there are medications you can take while breastfeeding. Talk to your healthcare provider about your breastfeeding questions. ³

¹ Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2018, May 4). Anxiety disorders. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anxiety/symptoms-causes/syc-20350961>

² Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2018, February 3). Depression (major depressive disorder). Mayo Clinic. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>

³ MotherToBaby. (2021, October 13). Retrieved 2022, from <https://mothertobaby.org/>



- 6. Is it true that pregnant women with depression have a higher chance of suffering from postpartum depression or mood disorders?** Yes. One of the most serious effects of not treating depression during pregnancy is the increased risk for postpartum depression (PPD). PPD is depression following childbirth. There are higher rates of PPD among women who were depressed during their pregnancy. PPD may interfere with a woman's ability to take care of and bond with her baby and this might have a negative effect on the baby's development and behavior. Let your provider know if you have a history of postpartum depression. Your provider can work with you to create a plan for future pregnancies.^{3,4}
- 7. What can I expect to happen during a therapy session?**
Therapy can be considered a problem-solving session. You describe your current situation and your feelings about it, you will be able to speak openly and will not be interrupted or judged. The therapist will listen and use their expertise to help you fix your problem. Your conversation will be kept confidential.⁵
- 8. Does therapy work? How effective is therapy?**
Therapy is effective for a variety of mental health concerns. Therapy teaches skills that are an effective part of treatment. The results of therapy tend to last longer than treatment by medication alone. A combination of medication and therapy is often most effective in treating depression and anxiety.^{6,7}
- 9. How long does therapy take? How do I know when to stop therapy?**
The amount of time you spend in therapy depends on your individual needs, goals, and resources. The number of recommended sessions varies. The majority of patients with anxiety or depression report feeling better after 1-4 months.⁸

⁴ What is postpartum depression? (2020, October). Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/postpartum-depression/what-is-postpartum-depression>

⁵ Gelb, S. (2015, December 5) What really happens in a therapy session - Psychology Today. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/all-grown/201512/what-really-happens-in-therapy-session>

⁶ American Psychological Association. (2012). Recognition of psychotherapy effectiveness. American Psychological Association. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/resolution-psychotherapy>

⁷ American Psychological Association. (2012). Research shows psychotherapy is effective but underutilized. American Psychological Association. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2012/08/psychotherapy-effective>

⁸ Su, E. (2019, March 20). The science behind how long therapy takes. Talkspace.. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.talkspace.com/blog/how-long-does-therapy-take-science/>



10. How do I choose the right therapist for me?

Choosing a therapist is like choosing any other provider—you can visit their website and read reviews if there are any available. You can also ask friends and family members, or your provider, for referrals. If you are hoping to work on a specific issue, try to find a therapist with expertise in that area. Your provider can help to refer you to a therapist who specializes in anxiety and depression.⁵

11. My partner and I are having problems. Should we be in individual counseling or come together?

Going to counseling together is a great place to start when you and your partner are both ready and willing to commit to a process of communication and growth. Also, when you experience big life changes, such as having a baby, it may be helpful to attend counseling with your partner. It may benefit each partner to have their own therapist throughout this process as well. Every situation is different, it is important to talk to your therapist about what will work best for you. A therapist can work with you and your partner to help you both feel heard and respected.⁹

⁹ Kerner, I. (2018, March 13). When is it really time for couples therapy? CNN. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/07/26/health/couple-therapy-kerner/index.html>