

## The Fraternal Twins of Mood Disorders

### Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It helps one deal with a tense situation. But, when it becomes an excessive irrational dread of everyday situations, it has become a disabling disorder.

#### Who is Affected

Anxiety disorders affect approximately 12% of adults in a given year.

#### Types of Anxiety Disorders

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little or nothing to provoke it

**Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** recurrent, unwanted thoughts and/or repetitive behaviors

**Panic Disorder:** unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** persistent frightening thoughts and memories of a terrifying ordeal

**Social Phobia or Social Anxiety Disorder:** overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations

#### Signs and Symptoms

All symptoms cluster around excessive irrational fear and dread, but each disorder has different symptoms.

**GAD:** worries accompanied by fatigue, headaches, muscle tension or other physical symptoms

**OCD:** persistent, unwelcomed thoughts or images, or the urgent need to engage in certain rituals

**Panic Disorder:** feelings of terror that strike suddenly and repeatedly without warning; frequently accompanied by a pounding heart, sweatiness, weakness, faintness and dizziness

**PTSD:** emotional numbness, detachment, sleep problems and a tendency to be easily startled

**Social Phobia:** a persistent, intense and chronic fear of being watched and judged by others and being embarrassed or humiliated; often accompanied by blushing, profuse sweating and other physical symptoms

#### Treatment

Anxiety disorders are generally treated with a combination of medication and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with effective results. Many people with anxiety disorders also benefit from support groups, family counseling and educational resources.

### Depression

Depression is a serious medical illness. It's more than just feeling "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. It's feeling down, low and hopeless for weeks at a time.

#### Who is Affected

Depression is a common condition that affects about 8% of adults every year.

#### Types of Depression

**Major Depressive Disorder or Major Depression:** a combination of symptoms that interfere with one's ability to work, sleep, study, eat and enjoy once-pleasurable activities

**Dysthymic Disorder, or Dysthymia:** long-term (two years or longer), but less severe symptoms that may not disable a person, but can prevent one from functioning normally or feeling well

Some forms of depressive disorders exhibit slightly different characteristics than those described above. They include:

**Psychotic Depression:** when a severe depressive illness is accompanied by some form of psychosis, such as a break with reality, hallucinations and delusions.

**Postpartum Depression:** diagnosed if a new mother develops a major depressive episode within one month after delivery

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** the onset of a depressive illness during winter when there is less natural sunlight; the depression generally lifts during spring and summer.

**Bipolar Disorder (also called Manic-Depressive):** cycling mood changes from extreme highs (mania) to extreme lows (depression)

#### Signs and Symptoms

##### Emotional

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in once-pleasurable hobbies or activities, including sex

##### Physical

- Chest pain
- Digestive problems
- Fatigue/exhaustion
- Headaches
- Pain (back, joint and/or muscle)
- Weight loss or gain

#### Treatment

Depression is the most treatable of mental illnesses. Most people who suffer from depression are helped by their treatment plans, which usually include medication and/or psychological counseling. Support from trusted family members, friends and self-help groups are also key to recovery.