

Fears and worries can be common and developmentally appropriate in childhood.

Excessive fear of anticipated dangers or problems, accompanied by an intense feeling, or physical symptoms may be signs of an underlying anxiety disorder if they are:

- Intense
- Frequent
- Persist over long periods of time
- Inappropriate for the child's age
- Interfere with the child's life



The CDC estimates that **9.4%** or approximately **5.8 million** children in the U.S. have diagnosable anxiety disorder

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition for both children and adults. Anxiety can be difficult to recognize because it can manifest in different ways depending on the child's age. Younger children tend to have more physical symptoms. General signs and symptoms of anxiety may include:

Early Childhood

- Frequent crying
- Excessive clinginess
- Sleep disturbance
- **Stomach aches/headaches**
- School avoidance
- Difficulty separating from parent

School-Age

- Perfectionism
- Self-doubt
- Excessive worries
- Withdrawing socially
- School avoidance
- Fear of harm
- Preoccupation with "what if"
- Hyperactivity
- **Stomach aches/headaches**
- Sleep disturbance

Adolescence

- Irritability
- Poor concentration
- Avoiding situations
- Poor school performance
- Sleep disturbance
- Increased sensitivity to criticism
- Substance use
- Unhealthy coping strategies

Anxiety engages our **fight, flight or freeze** system and leads to physical and mental symptoms. This can cause avoidance, fleeing from stress, verbal and physical aggression and feeling emotionally or physically stuck.



Protective Factors

Having family meals together
Feeling connected to school/community
Resilience
Problem-solving skills
Sense of purpose

Treatment Options

Therapy alone
Medication alone
Combination of both

Getting help early is better. Never worry alone. Consult your pediatrician.

