

PRIOR MINDSET

AGENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD) ADULTS

Definition: Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by chronic and excessive worry about everyday issues that persist for at least six months. This worry is disproportionate to any actual risk, causing significant distress or impairment. The anxiety is difficult to control and is not solely related to another mental health disorder, substance misuse, or a physical health condition.



Diagnostic Criteria: To diagnose GAD in adults according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), at least three of the following symptoms must be present most of the time:

- Restlessness or nervousness
- Easily fatigued
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleep disturbance

In children, the diagnosis requires at least one of these symptoms.

Exclusion Criteria: GAD is a diagnosis of exclusion. It is essential to rule out physical health conditions, other mental health disorders, and the effects of medications or substances as primary causes.



Symptoms: Common symptoms of GAD include:

- Autonomic complaints: sweating, light-headedness, palpitations, dizziness, and epigastric discomfort
 - Worries that may include fears about health, accidents, or other significant concerns
 - Anxiety that can be 'free-floating', not confined to specific situations or circumstances
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Diagnosis and Evaluation: Physical examinations and laboratory tests are usually normal if no other physical or mental health conditions or substance misuse issues are present. Diagnosis involves assessing symptoms, excluding other conditions, and evaluating the impact on daily life.



Treatment: Treatment for GAD typically involves:

- **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is commonly used and focuses on altering negative thought patterns and behaviours.
 - **Medications:** Selective Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can help manage symptoms. Please discuss this with your local GP.
 - **Combination Approach:** A combination of psychotherapy and medication may be recommended for effective treatment.
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Summary: Generalised Anxiety Disorder is a long-term condition marked by excessive, uncontrollable worry that affects daily functioning. Proper diagnosis involves excluding other causes, and treatment usually includes psychotherapy, medications, or a combination of both.



Please visit WWW.PRIORMINDSET.COM to book a free 15-minute CBT consultation.

Resources and tools

- [NHS Self-help - Generalised anxiety disorder in adults](#)
- [Self-help strategies for GAD \(booklet\) – Anxiety Canada](#)



References

BMJ Best Practice. (n.d.). *Generalized anxiety disorder*. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://bestpractice.bmj.com/topics/en-gb/120>

NHS. (n.d.). Self-help: Generalised anxiety disorder in adults. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/self-help/>

NHS. (n.d.). *Treatment for generalised anxiety disorder*. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/treatment/>

Self-help Strategies for GAD (Booklet) – Anxiety Canada- Anxiety Canada. (n.d.). Self-help strategies for GAD. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/adult_hmgad.pdf