



All adolescence experiences some amount of anxiety at times. Anxiety is actually a normal reaction to stress, and sometimes it helps teens deal with tense or overwhelming situations. Similar to adults many activities such as public speaking, final reports, important sport competitions, or even socializing with specific people can cause feelings of discomfort and apprehension. Also, as adults, they may also experience excessive sweating, an increase in their heartbeat or changes in how they breathe. That's how the brain responds to anxious feelings.

For some adolescents, however, anxiety can go beyond these typical symptoms to the point of negatively impacting their participation in extracurricular activities, friendships and family relationships, and their schoolwork. In a nutshell, when it starts to impact your adolescents' functionality or normal daily living, the possibility of an anxiety disorder should be considered. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 25% of 13- to 18-year-olds have an anxiety disorder, and just under 6% have a severe anxiety disorder.

## **As a parent what to look for in your adolescent?**

### **1. Social changes**

Avoiding social interactions with usual friends

Avoiding extracurricular activities

Isolating from peer group

### **2. Physical changes**

Gastrointestinal problems

Excessive fatigue, more than usual

Frequent headaches, including migraines

Unexplained aches and pains

Complaints of not feeling well with no obvious medical cause

Increased or decrease appetite

### **3. Emotional changes**

Feeling “revved up”

Impatience

Irritability

Difficulty concentrating

Restlessness

Unexplained outbursts

### **Symptoms of panic attacks**

Panic attacks look differently for different people and some experience mild symptoms of panic without enduring a full panic attack. The following symptoms are common among people with anxiety disorders:

Rapid heartbeat

Sweating and trembling

Dizziness

Upset stomach

Difficulty breathing

Sensation of a swollen tongue

Chest pain

Feeling like they’re dying

Feeling like they’re “going crazy”

Numbness or tingling in arms and legs