

# WHAT IS ANXIETY?

## 10 WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

Worry and stress are normal. You may be concerned about being accepted by peers or about grades or about an upcoming test. You may wonder what to do about a family or personal situation, about college, or about finishing high school. Being a teenager isn't easy and going through some rough times is common. However, there is a difference between normal worrying and having an anxiety disorder. Having an anxiety disorder means that your worries might be excessive or irrational AND it interferes with what you want to do or what you need to do to get through your day successfully.

The following are ten signs of anxiety in teens:

- 1 Frequent or excessive worry about school, friends, following rules, or about getting the approval of teachers and parents. Although it may be normal for teens to be concerned about different parts of life, if you have excessive worry every day for 2 weeks or more, you may have anxiety.
- 2 Physical problems such as headaches, stomachaches, or tiredness with no physical cause.
- 3 Problems sleeping. This could be having a hard time falling asleep, waking up throughout the night, or waking up early. When teens feel tired either when they first wake or throughout the day, they may not be sleeping properly.
- 4 Treating yourself unkindly, being overly critical of yourself or doubting your abilities. Low self-esteem.
- 5 Continually wanting or seeking the reassurance or approval from teachers, parents, or other adults in your life.
- 6 Continually checking and rechecking schoolwork or other chores to make sure they have been completed correctly. Although double-checking work is always a good idea, if you never feel satisfied with work and must check and recheck your work, this could be a sign of anxiety.
- 7 Avoidance of social activities, a withdrawal from friends or not wanting to go to school.
- 8 Other mental illnesses. Some common co-existing conditions may be ADHD or depression. If you have been diagnosed with either ADHD or depression, watch for symptoms of anxiety as well.
- 9 Inability to stop the worry despite reassurances from school personnel or parents.
- 10 Irritability, mood swings or use of alcohol or drugs to cope with moods.

