

What Is Worry?

Worry is the mental process of thinking about problems or fears—especially about things that might happen in the future. It's a natural part of life and can help us plan or stay alert. But **chronic or excessive worry** can negatively affect mental and physical health.

Common Signs of Excessive Worry

- Repetitive, racing thoughts
- Trouble sleeping or staying asleep
- Restlessness or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headaches or muscle tension
- Constantly seeking reassurance
- Avoidance of situations due to fear or dread

How Worry Affects Mental Health

When worry becomes constant or uncontrollable, it can lead to:

- **Anxiety Disorders** – especially Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- **Depression** – prolonged worry can drain emotional energy
- **Panic Attacks** – worry can trigger physical symptoms like shortness of breath or heart palpitations
- **Obsessive Thinking** – worry can spiral into obsessive or irrational fears
- **Impaired Daily Functioning** – chronic worry can affect work, school, and relationships

The Brain and Worry

- Worry activates the **amygdala**, the brain's fear center.
- Long-term activation increases **cortisol**, the stress hormone, which can affect memory, focus, and mood.
- Over time, this can alter brain patterns, making it harder to regulate emotions.

Healthy Ways to Manage Worry

- ✓ **Set "Worry Time"** – Allow 15–20 minutes a day to write or reflect on worries, then move on
- ✓ **Challenge Negative Thoughts** – Ask: "Is this thought realistic?"
- ✓ **Limit News or Social Media** – Avoid overexposure to distressing content
- ✓ **Practice Relaxation** – Try deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or yoga
- ✓ **Stay Present** – Use mindfulness or grounding exercises
- ✓ **Talk to Someone** – Don't hold it in—speak to a trusted friend or therapist
- ✓ **Seek Professional Support** – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is highly effective for chronic worry

Remember:

- Occasional worry is normal
- Constant, uncontrollable worry is not
- **Help is available—and recovery is possible**



FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP OR SUPPORT, CONTACT:

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