

Beyond the Butterflies



Is it worry or anxiety?

It's normal to feel that nervous fluttering in your stomach from time to time. But, if you have worry that lasts and causes problems with daily living and relationships, making it hard to enjoy life, you may have generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

Warning signs of GAD can include:

- Sleep problems
- Tiredness and a bad mood
- Trouble focusing
- Endless worry about big or little things
- Tense or aching muscles
- Shaking or feeling jumpy
- Sweating, unsettled stomach or loose stools
- Shortness of breath or rapid heartbeat

About 40 million U.S. adults ages 18 and older suffer from various kinds of anxiety including:

- Panic
- Obsessive-compulsive thoughts
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Phobias

If it's more than butterflies, don't wing it when it comes to your feelings. See a behavioral health professional right away, and help your anxiety take flight.



BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois

Surprise Attack:



Heading off post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

You may have heard of PTSD and think it's only about military combat. While that is a widely seen cause, PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can also happen after going through, or seeing, other upsetting events. These can include:

- Natural disasters
- Terrorist incidents
- Accidents
- Physical or sexual attack as a child or adult

If you have thoughts or dreams about a traumatic event that keep coming back, or if you sometimes feel as though the event is happening again, and it has lasted more than one month, you should talk to your doctor or behavioral health professional.

Recovering from PTSD takes time. Try these steps to help with coping and recovery:

- Step up family and social contacts to get support.
- Take a relaxing walk, listen to soothing music or read a favorite book.
- Get moving with physical activity to help your mood and sleep, boost energy, and ease tension.
- Rest your mind with plenty of sleep (seven to nine hours each night) to mend from stress.
- Keep a daily record of your thoughts to help you work through issues.
- Skip drugs and alcohol, which can make symptoms worse and may lead to addiction problems.
- Curb caffeine, which can trigger worry that may also disturb your sleep.
- Reach out to others by volunteering. It will improve your self-respect, and you will gain purpose and a sense of success.
- Nix the news or other TV programs if watching will disturb your sleep.

When you know the signs and ways to cope, you can win the battle against PTSD and get back to enjoying your life.