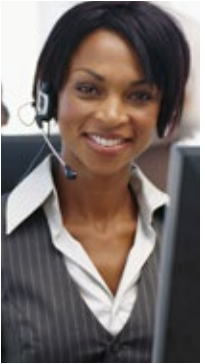




# BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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## Understanding Anxiety

Did you know that anxiety in and of itself is actually a good thing? It helps us avoid harm, prepare for important or stressful situations, and warns us when we need to take immediate action. Basically, having some level of anxiety helps keep us safe and prepared.

When people refer to having anxiety in a negative way, they are actually referring to an “anxiety disorder” of some type. An anxiety disorder may be present when your anxiety is persistent, overwhelming, and seemingly uncontrollable.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of American reports that an estimated 40 million American adults suffer from anxiety disorders and that these disorders are the most common form of psychiatric illness affecting adults and children.

Anxiety disorders include many specific phobias and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic attacks, and, social anxiety disorder.

### GAD

Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by persistent, excessive, and unrealistic worry about everyday

things. GAD affects 6.8 million American adults and women are twice as likely to experience GAD. People with this disorder experience exaggerated worry and tension over things like money, health, relationships, work, and family even when there is no reason for concern. GAD often causes people to unnecessarily anticipate disaster and expect the worst. Generally, GAD is diagnosed when a person worries excessively about a variety of everyday life things for a period of at least 6 months.

### Panic

Panic attacks generally come out of the blue without warning. They can occur prior to a stressful event such as public speaking but many times they occur for no apparent reason. It is estimated that about 6 million Americans suffer panic attacks in a given year. Panic attacks generally develop in early adulthood and are twice as likely to affect women. Symptoms of a panic attack include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Pounding chest or chest pain
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Shaking or trembling
- Intense feeling of dread

For more information or support on anxiety, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

**1.800.327.2255**

eni's BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life





- Feeling of choking or smothering
- Tingling or numbness in the fingers or toes
- Chills or hot flashes
- A fear that you are losing control or about to die

Panic attacks are so scary that people may develop an intense and persistent fear that they will have another one, leading to panic disorder.

### Social Anxiety Disorder

Social anxiety disorder is characterized by an excessive and unreasonable fear of social situations. This anxiety arises from a fear of being closely watched, judged, and criticized by others. Around 15 million adults suffer from social anxiety disorder and the typical onset is during the early teenage years, around 13. People with social anxiety disorder fear they will make mistakes, look bad, or be humiliated in front of others. When extreme, this disorder can cause people to avoid social situations and can seriously impede one's daily life.

### Coping With Anxiety

First, it is important to separate "normal" anxiety from an anxiety disorder. For example, it is perfectly normal to worry about paying bills or be extremely nervous before a job interview. However, constant and unsubstantiated worry that causes distress and interferes with everyday life may signal a disorder.

There are natural ways to help manage anxiety. Some experts believe that chamomile and green tea can help calm nerves. Exercise has also been shown to help ease anxiety both immediately and in the long term. Health.com recommends at least 21 minutes of some sort of exercise that gets your heart pumping in order to

reap the anti-anxiety benefits. Smelling lavender has been shown to reduce anxiety in some studies.

People get more anxious and irritable when they are hungry so when you feel anxiety coming on it may help to eat something right away. A quick sustainable snack like a handful of walnuts, or a piece of dark chocolate is recommended. Many doctors agree that eating a whole food, plant based diet, with plenty of dark leafy greens for folate, along with seafood for omega-3s, and carefully selected meats will help reduce anxiety. Try yoga or meditation in order to practice mindful breathing, which can help you relax and feel less like things are spinning out of your control.

Anxiety disorders are serious medical conditions that can wreak havoc on one's life if left untreated. Remember that you are not alone as there are literally millions of other people also experiencing anxiety, so do not hesitate to seek help. If you feel that you may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, it is important to consult your doctor to determine the best course of treatment for you. There are a wide variety of treatments ranging from cognitive behavioral therapy to medication. The good news is with treatment, anxiety can be well managed.

*If you are feeling anxious or fear that you may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, remember that eni's EAP is available to help.*

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