

Generalized Anxiety in Children

Understanding Worry and Anxiety with Care

What is Generalized Anxiety?

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in children involves excessive worry about a variety of things, including school, health, family, and the future. Unlike occasional worry, anxiety in GAD is persistent, often occurring most days for six months or more.

Common Signs of Anxiety

Children with anxiety may show the following signs:

- Frequent worries or fears, even when there is no clear reason
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Stomachaches, headaches, or feeling unwell with no medical cause
- Avoiding school, social situations, or activities they once enjoyed
- Constant need for reassurance
- Irritability or restlessness

What Causes Anxiety?

Anxiety can stem from a mix of factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events. It may also be linked to a child's temperament or sensitivity to changes and uncertainty.

How is Anxiety Diagnosed?

Anxiety is diagnosed through a detailed history and observation. A healthcare provider may speak with the child and parents, use questionnaires, and rule out any medical issues that could mimic anxiety symptoms. It is important to understand the impact of anxiety on daily life.

How Can We Support a Child with Anxiety?

- Create a calm, predictable environment at home
- Encourage regular routines, including meals, sleep, and physical activity
- Help your child talk about their feelings openly and without judgment
- Use relaxation techniques like deep breathing, visualizations, or calming music
- Model calm behavior and positive coping strategies
- Avoid excessive reassurance and instead build problem-solving skills.

Treatment Options

Treatment may include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which teaches children how to manage anxious thoughts
- Family counseling or parent coaching

- In some cases, medication may be recommended
- School-based accommodations to reduce stress in the learning environment

When to Seek Help

If anxiety is interfering with your child's sleep, eating, friendships, or school performance, it may be time to speak with a pediatrician or mental health professional. Early support can make a big difference in your child's emotional wellbeing and development.

Final Notes from Our Clinic

Worry is a normal part of growing up, but when it becomes overwhelming, we are here to help. Our team works closely with families to support children who are struggling with anxiety, using evidence-based tools and a compassionate approach.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.