



spotlight on health

Is It Stress, Or Something More?

(NAPSA)—Life has been stressful for months. Some days are particularly bad. You can't concentrate at work. And, when you come home, you are so irritable you can't relax and you have trouble falling asleep.

These are some of the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), a condition that affects about 5 percent of Americans—two-thirds of whom are women. Anxiety disorders cost the nation more than \$42 billion a year, much of it attributable to misdiagnosis and undertreatment. Why? One factor is that many people don't recognize the signs of GAD—one of the most common of anxiety disorders—and confuse it with the stress of everyday life. In addition, loss of productivity at work and absenteeism account for 10 percent of the cost, a high price to pay for families and employers.

W.A.T. is GAD?

GAD is defined as excessive and uncontrollable Worry, Anxiety and Tension that have occurred on more days than not for at least six months and may be associated with physical symptoms including sweating, abdominal upset, trembling, twitching, and muscle aches or soreness. GAD can also cause one to feel restless, edgy, or easily fatigued. It can make concentrating on the simplest tasks difficult and can cause sleeping problems. GAD can have tremendous impact on daily living, causing or exacerbating unrealistic worries about job responsibilities, finances, and the health and well-being of family members. It is a chronic disorder, with symptoms fluctuating and often worsening during

How Do You Know If You Have GAD?

Are you plagued by excessive worry or mental anxiety? Have these feelings persisted for a period of six months or longer?

If so, you may have GAD if you have also experienced three or more of the following symptoms, and they cannot be explained by another psychiatric or medical condition.

• Does it seem like your life is just one worry after another?

• Do you often:

- feel irritable?
- feel restless, keyed-up or on edge?
- have difficulty concentrating?
- have trouble sleeping?
- feel exhausted, even when sufficient rest?
- have muscle aches and pains or muscle tension?
- get easily fatigued?

stressful events.

What does it feel like?

Imagine the feelings you experience when you've lost your wallet or have to give a presentation to a senior manager. Most of us would experience normal stress in both of these scenarios. People with GAD live with similar apprehension. But their worry and anxiety are excessive and have lasted for six months or longer.

What can you do if you think you have GAD?

Talk to your doctor. Doctors can prescribe a medication, Effexor® XR (venlafaxine HCl), an antidepressant that has also proven effective in the treatment of GAD. To learn more about GAD and Effexor XR, visit www.effexorxr.com or ask your doctor. Patients taking Effexor XR should be sure to tell all their health care providers about all the medications they take, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins

and herbal supplements. Patients taking MAO inhibitors, another kind of antidepressant, should not take Effexor XR. Side effects associated with Effexor XR in depression trials included nausea, dizziness, sleepiness, abnormal ejaculation, sweating, dry mouth, and nervousness; and in GAD trials included nausea, dry mouth, insomnia, abnormal ejaculation, anorexia, constipation, nervousness, and sweating. Effexor XR may raise blood pressure in some patients; therefore, blood pressure should be monitored regularly by the doctor.

Effexor XR may impair judgment, thinking, or motor skills; patients should exercise caution until they have adapted to therapy. Pregnant or nursing women should not take any antidepressant without consulting their doctor.

Ask your doctor for additional information about Effexor XR.