



BetterSafe

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PTSD



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that some people develop after seeing or living through an event that caused or threatened serious harm or death. Symptoms include flashbacks or bad dreams, emotional numbness, intense guilt or worry, angry outbursts, feeling “on edge,” or avoiding thoughts and situations that remind them of the trauma. In PTSD, these symptoms last at least one month. PTSD can happen to anyone at any age. Children get PTSD too.

You don't have to be physically hurt to get PTSD. You can get it after you see other people, such as a friend or family member get hurt. Living through or seeing something that's upsetting and dangerous can cause

PTSD. This can include:

- › Death or serious illness of a loved one
- › War or combat
- › Car accidents and plane crashes
- › Hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires
- › Violent crimes, like a robbery or shooting.

There are many other things that can cause PTSD. Talk to your doctor if you are troubled by something that happened to you or someone you care about.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE PTSD?

Your doctor can help you find out. Call your doctor if you have any of these problems for at least 1 month:

- › Suffering from bad dreams
- › Feeling like the scary event is happening again (flashbacks)
- › Experiencing scary thoughts you can't control
- › Staying away from places and things that remind you of what happened
- › Feeling worried, guilty, or sad



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- › Sleeping too little or too much
- › Feeling on edge
- › Fighting with loved ones or frequent angry outbursts
- › Thoughts of hurting yourself or others
- › Feeling alone.
- › Refusing to go places or play with friends.

WHEN DOES PTSD START?

PTSD starts at different times for different people. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. Other people develop new or more severe signs months or even years later.

TREATMENT

PTSD can be treated. A doctor or mental health professional who has experience in treating people with PTSD can help you. Treatment may include “talk” therapy, medication, or both.

Treatment might take 6 to 12 weeks. For some people, it takes longer.

Treatment is not the same for everyone. What works for you might not work for someone else.

Drinking alcohol or using other drugs will not help PTSD go away and may even make it worse.

FACTS ABOUT PTSD

- › PTSD can affect anyone at any age.
- › Millions of Americans get PTSD every year.
- › Many war veterans have had PTSD.
- › Women tend to get PTSD more often than men.
- › PTSD can be treated. You can feel better.

Children who have PTSD may show other types of problems. These can include:

- › Behaving like they did when they were younger
- › Being unable to talk
- › Complaining of stomach problems or headaches a lot

DON'T HURT YOURSELF

- ✓ You are not alone. Get help if you are thinking about hurting yourself.
- ✓ Call your doctor.
- ✓ Call 911 if you need help right away.
- ✓ Talk to a trained counselor at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

