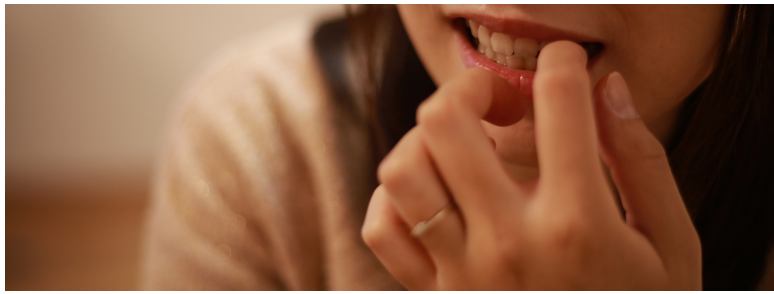


# ANXIETY

## PUBLIC HEALTH BRIEF

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## DATA <sup>4</sup>

**Harford County Hospitalizations: January 2023 - March 2023**

Visits per 1000: 5.7

Patients per 1000: 4.9

Male population: 34%

Female population: 66%

African American population: 27%

## SPOTLIGHT: ANXIETY & HEART DISEASE

There is believed to be a strong connection between anxiety and heart disease. When an individual experiences anxiety, their body reacts in ways that can put extreme stress on their heart. The physical symptoms of anxiety can be especially damaging to individuals with existing cardiac disease.

Anxiety may have an association with the following heart disorders and cardiac risk factors:

- Rapid heart rate (tachycardia) – In serious cases, can interfere with normal heart function and increase the risk of sudden cardiac arrest.
- Increased blood pressure – If chronic, can lead to coronary disease, weakening of the heart muscle, and heart failure.
- Decreased heart rate variability – This may result in a higher incidence of death after an acute heart attack.

Individuals who experience these risk factors over a long period of time can eventually develop heart disease, which can lead to heart attack and death.

## TREATMENT <sup>1, 2</sup>

There are several methods to treat anxiety and this varies from the type of anxiety to the severity of it.

**Lifestyle & home remedies include:**

- Staying physically active
- Avoid alcohol & recreational drugs
- Sleeping routinely and enough
- Eating healthy

**Medical treatment includes:**

- Psychotherapy (also known as talk therapy or psychological counseling)
  - Exposure therapy: Focuses on confronting the fears underlying an anxiety disorder to help people engage in activities that they have been avoiding.
  - Cognitive therapy: focuses on identifying, challenging, and then neutralizing unhelpful or distorted thoughts underlying anxiety disorders.
- Medications
  - SSRIs (Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)
  - SNRIs (Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors)

## LOCAL RESOURCES

- Harford County offers several resources to assist individuals in coping with anxiety. From treatment and support services to outreach, education, and more. Please visit: [harfordcountyhealth.com/behavioral-health-new-page/behavioral-health-community-based-behavioral-health-treatment-and-support-services/](https://harfordcountyhealth.com/behavioral-health-new-page/behavioral-health-community-based-behavioral-health-treatment-and-support-services/)
- The Klein Family Harford Crisis Center also provides a wide range of mental health services with 24/7 crisis counseling support. Please visit <https://harfordcrisiscenter.org/> or call 1-800-NEXT-STEP for more information.

Sources:

1. Hopkins Medicine. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/anxiety-and-heart-disease>
2. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anxiety/symptoms-causes/syc-20350961>
3. Very Well Health. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/anxiety-and-heart-disease-5202217>
4. Crisp Public Health Dashboard.

## WHAT IS ANXIETY <sup>1</sup>

Anxiety can occur in every human being, but when escalated, it can become an issue. Anxiety is a type of mental health disorder that causes frequent, intense, excessive, and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. This can involve repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes, known as panic attacks.

### Symptoms of anxiety:

- Constant feelings of nervousness, restlessness, or tenseness
- Breathing rapidly
- Constant worrying
- Having a constant sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Gastrointestinal problems

## TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS <sup>2</sup>

- **Agoraphobia:** Anxiety disorder in which you fear and often avoid places or situations that might cause you to panic.
- **Generalized anxiety disorder:** Persistent and excessive anxiety and worry about activities or events — even ordinary, routine issues.
- **Panic disorder:** Repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks).
- **Selective mutism:** Consistent failure of children to speak in certain situations, such as school, even when they can speak in other situations, such as at home with close family members.
- **Separation anxiety disorder:** Childhood disorder characterized by anxiety that's excessive for the child's developmental level and related to separation from parents or others who have parental roles.
- **Social anxiety disorder:** Involves high levels of anxiety, fear, and avoidance of social situations due to feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness, and concern about being judged or viewed negatively by others.
- **Specific phobias:** Characterized by major anxiety when you're exposed to a specific object or situation and a desire to avoid it.
- **Substance-induced anxiety disorder:** Characterized by symptoms of intense anxiety or panic that are a direct result of misusing drugs, taking medications, being exposed to a toxic substance or withdrawal from drugs.