

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a sense of anticipated danger or trouble—uneasiness, worry or dread about what might happen. It is a normal human reaction that involves both the mind and the body. It is part of our “fight or flight” instinct and is a protection system when we perceive “danger.” This anxiety is shown in many ways throughout our childhood: a baby may cry when a stranger holds them, a toddler may fear the dark, a school aged child may worry about germs, and teenagers may feel sick over having to make a presentation in front of their class. These are all completely normal reactions.



What happens when we feel anxious?

When our body and mind perceive a “threatening” situation, a person may feel things like a faster heartbeat and breathing, stomach queasiness, tense muscles or sweaty palms. Anxiety can also cause sleep loss and stomach aches. While these are all normal reactions to anxiety, the feelings and symptoms can vary from mild to very intense. Because anxiety makes a person more focused, alert and ready for danger, it can help us to do our best in performance situations. However, when the anxiety becomes too intense, it can interfere with normal life.

What type of Anxiety is not normal?

When fear and anxiety begin to overtake reason, that is not normal. Most children feel anxious when they have a big test or on the first day of school, but if your child is having a lot of worry, dread or feelings of doom in situations where other children would not, then that could be a sign of an anxiety disorder.

What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety Disorders are the most common mental health conditions and are highly treatable. They usually involve excessive amounts of worry, fear, dread and nervousness. There are many different types of anxiety disorders and many different symptoms. The things that they have in common are: feelings of anxiety that are intense and frequent; worries that are out of proportion to the situation; and feelings that are having a negative effect on a person’s daily life. These feelings could come on suddenly or gradually over time and often the person cannot describe what is causing the anxiety.

How are Anxiety Disorders treated?

Anxiety Disorders are treated in a variety of ways. Many children respond well to meditation/relaxation techniques. Some may need to talk to a counselor or therapist to help them develop coping strategies. Some children may benefit from anxiety medication in combination with therapy. These are all decisions that are made in a team-based approach with the patient, family, pediatrician and specialists.

What do I do if I feel like my child may have an Anxiety Disorder?

Raleigh Pediatric Associates is prepared to help! We have a Registered Nurse in each office working as a Behavioral Health Coordinator. You can leave her a message and she will return your call within a couple days. During this call, she will discuss the symptoms and have you complete appropriate diagnostic screening tools. Once these screenings are complete, the Behavioral Health Coordinator will arrange for a consult appointment with one of our pediatricians or an outside referral depending on your situation. The information and screening tools will be forwarded to the physician, so that they can review the information prior to your appointment. Our physicians are equipped to treat all medical conditions including anxiety and depression. Our practice also partners with psychologists and psychiatrists in the community when needed to achieve the best outcome for our patients.