



Anger

Anger is a natural response to frustration and/or events that cause displeasure. Too much or pent up anger can play a role in mental and physical problems. Chronic anger can lead to illnesses, drug and alcohol problems, headaches, domestic violence, etc. Anger turned inward can result in depression. Anger can also be a symptom of depression.

See **Depression** at www.HealthyLearn.com.



Studies have found that anger and depression can increase the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.

Angry outbursts can cause relationship problems with others. On the other hand, learning to manage anger and frustration can enhance emotional well-being and lead to a healthier, happier life.

Signs & Symptoms

Anger can range from mild displeasure to outright rage. Symptoms of anger include:

- Feeling restless.
- Teeth clenching. Trembling of the lips or hands.
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- Yelling, slamming doors, etc.
- Being less productive.
- Sleeping problems.
- Violent outbursts.

Causes

Unmet expectations can cause anger. So can feeling frustrated and disrespect from others. Physical pain and discomfort from heat, noise, crowds, etc., can provoke an anger response. Low blood sugar can do this, too.

Questions to Ask

Did anger become a problem after a stroke, head injury, or head surgery?

NO



YES
See Doctor

With outbursts of anger do you have any of these problems?

- Memory loss or confusion.
- You are less able to figure things out or remain alert.
- You can't perform routine tasks.

NO



YES
See Doctor
or
See Counselor

Does anger result in any of these problems?

- Physical or emotional harm.
- Destruction of property.
- Anger can't be controlled when drinking or taking a drug.
- Long term anger causes a lot of stress or a feeling of having no power.

NO



YES
See Doctor
or
See Counselor

Do any of these problems occur?

- Sudden fits of anger occur when not eating for several hours, especially in a diabetic.
- In females, anger leads to aggression 10 to 14 days before menstrual periods.
- Anger interferes with day-to-day life.

NO



YES
Call Doctor



See Self-Care / Prevention on next page



Anger, Continued

Treatment

Self-care measures can help in most cases. When these are not enough, an evaluation from a doctor or mental health care provider may be needed. Treatment will depend on the cause.

Self-Care / Prevention

- Don't ignore anger. Express it in a healthy way.
 - Share your angry feelings with a person you trust and feel safe with, such as a friend, partner, teacher, etc.
 - Get the anger "off your chest." Do this calmly and without being cruel. Tell persons you feel angry with how they have upset you. You will likely start to feel better.
 - If you can't express your anger out loud, write it down.
- Express your wants, needs, and feelings, in ways that do not offend others. Doing so can keep you from feeling that you were taken advantage of and getting angry as a result. Use "*I*" rather than "*you*" statements. For example, say "*I* get angry when *I* feel put down by your comments in front of our friends." Don't say, "*You* make me angry when *you* put me down in front of our friends."
- List reasons and times when you have too much anger. Note if there are any patterns to your anger and if they can be changed.
- Channel the energy from anger into something positive or creative. Clean out drawers. Take a short walk or do other exercises. Paint, write poems, etc.
- Distract yourself. If you're stuck in traffic, try to accept the delay and that it is beyond your control. Instead of clenching the steering wheel, play pleasant music on the radio or listen to tapes or CDs that are calming.
- To lessen anger outbursts, think of what will happen as a result of your anger.
- Find humor in situations that result in anger.
- Practice learning to lighten up.
- Use stress management techniques on a routine basis.
(See **Self-Care / Prevention for Stress** at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Think before you act or speak. Try to understand your anger. Plan how you want to react or respond.
- Eat healthy foods. Eat at regular times.



Get more information from:

HealthyLearn®
www.HealthyLearn.com

Mental Health America
(MHA)
800.969.6642
www.mentalhealthamerica.net