

Health Conditions Commonly Mistaken for Anxiety

Many medical conditions produce symptoms that mimic anxiety disorder, such as heart palpitations, shortness of breath, fatigue, and dizziness. As a result, people may be misdiagnosed or be dealing with both conditions. These eight conditions can be commonly mistaken for anxiety:

1. **Hyperthyroidism**—An overactive thyroid speeds up metabolism, causing a fast heartbeat and nervousness. Tremors and unexplained weight loss can point toward the thyroid instead.
2. **Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS)**—Standing up too fast can trigger dizziness and a pounding heart. Symptoms flare with position changes, not with worry, when it is POTS.
3. **Inappropriate sinus tachycardia (IST)**—This is characterized by a persistently high resting heart rate that won't settle even at rest, unlike anxiety-driven spikes that ease once the trigger passes.
4. **Endometriosis**—Chronic pelvic pain and fatigue can raise stress levels that look like anxiety. Symptoms tied closely to the menstrual cycle can be a giveaway.
5. **Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS, formerly PCOS)**—Hormonal swings can bring irritability and mood changes that mimic anxiety. Irregular cycles and elevated testosterone tell the real story.
6. **Inflammatory bowel disease (IBS)**—Chronic gut inflammation brings cramping and fatigue that can look like anxious tension. Blood in the stool signals something more.
7. **Adrenal insufficiency**—Low cortisol can cause fatigue and low blood pressure that may feel like panic. Salt cravings and skin darkening may point to another cause.
8. **Fibromyalgia**—Widespread pain and exhaustion often travel alongside real anxiety, making the two easy to tangle together. Tender points at specific spots help set it apart.

If you've received an anxiety disorder diagnosis but suspect something else may be occurring, consider a second opinion.

6 Tips to Reduce Overthinking

Overthinking is something almost everyone experiences: replaying conversations, worrying about decisions, or imagining worst-case scenarios on a loop. While it's natural to reflect on problems, chronic overthinking can drain your energy, fuel anxiety, and make it harder to actually solve the issues you're focused on. Instead of leading to clarity, it often traps people into cycles of doubt and rumination.

The good news is that overthinking is a habit, and like any habit, it can be reshaped with the right strategies and a bit of practice. Consider these six tips to reduce overthinking:

1. **Notice when it's happening.** Awareness is the first step. When you catch yourself spiraling, simply saying to yourself, "I'm overthinking this", can interrupt the cycle.
2. **Set a time limit.** Give yourself a specific window (e.g., ten minutes) to think through a problem. When time is up, consciously shift your attention elsewhere.
3. **Challenge the thought.** Ask yourself if the worry is based on facts or assumptions. Often, overthinking involves jumping to conclusions rather than working from evidence.
4. **Focus on what you can control.** Redirect energy toward actionable steps instead of hypothetical outcomes you can't influence.
5. **Practice mindfulness.** Grounding techniques, like focusing on your breath or naming five things you can see, help anchor you in the present moment rather than the past or future.
6. **Talk it out.** Sharing your thoughts with someone you trust can offer perspective and stop ideas from looping endlessly in your own mind.

Overthinking often feels productive, but it rarely leads anywhere new. By building small habits that interrupt the cycle, you can free up mental space for clearer thinking, better decisions, and a calmer mind overall.

Contact a mental health professional for additional guidance or information.

It Can Wait

Distracted drivers



Take a pledge to put down the cellphone to protect yourself and others on the road.

Research reported by the National Safety Council indicates that an estimated 28 percent of car crashes (1.6 million per year) involve cellphone use at the time of the crash.

Pledge to be a safe driver:

- I will not talk on a handheld phone or text while driving.
- I will pull over or let voicemail pick up the call if my phone rings while I'm driving.
- If I must talk on the phone, I will use a hands-free device (though the safest choice is no cellphone at all).
- I will encourage my family and friends to take this pledge