

## Signs and symptoms of social anxiety disorder

Social anxiety disorder is persistent and overwhelming fear of or anxiety about one or more social situations where embarrassment may occur. This fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed. Although anxiety about some social situations is common in the general population, people with social anxiety disorder can worry excessively about them and can do so for weeks in advance. They may also ruminate on social events they perceive have gone wrong for weeks afterwards. Usually the condition causes significant impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning.

### Examples of situations that can provoke social anxiety are:

• Any situation that involves human interaction.	• Talking to authority figures.
• Inviting people into the home.	• Working or going to school.
• Eating or drinking while being observed.	• Activities with peers.
• Using public toilets.	• Being the centre of attention.
• Attending parties.	• Signing documents or writing in front of people.
• Starting conversations or not being able to think of something to say.	• Social interaction and meeting people, including strangers.
• Shopping when interaction is required, such as at checkouts or in smaller shops.	• Public performance including speaking in groups.
• Swimming, gym or exercise classes.	• For children and young people: participating in classroom activities, asking for help in class and participating in school performances.

### Feelings and emotional symptoms

• Anxiety, stress or worry.	• Feeling panicky or having panic attacks.
• Embarrassment, shame or humiliation.	• Fatigue.
• Loneliness.	• Frustration or anger.
• Acting or feeling foolish.	• A fear of negative observation/evaluation.

### Physical and cognitive symptoms

• Feeling hot, blushing, sweating, developing a rash.	• Unable to think straight or the mind goes blank.
• Dry mouth and throat.	• Stumbling over words.
• Facial freezing or tension.	• Racing thoughts.
• Hand tremor.	• Poor concentration and short-term memory.
• Racing heart or palpitations.	• Easily distracted and uncoordinated.
• Trembling.	• Self-criticism.
• Headache.	• Urgency to use the toilet.
• Grinding teeth.	• Tightness in chest or hyperventilation.
• Nausea or butterflies, a churning stomach.	• Crying.
	• Feeling lightheaded or faint.

### Behavioural symptoms and safety behaviours

Distraction (not listening, fidgeting).	Talking excessively.
Housebound.	Avoiding initiating conversations.
Not speaking or speaking quietly.	Non-assertive behavior.
Avoiding eye contact.	Missing appointments, events or classes.
Leaving/avoiding the situation.	Choosing solitary hobbies or careers.