

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PTSD



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better. If the symptoms get worse, you may have PTSD

Getting effective treatment after PTSD symptoms develop can be critical to reduce symptoms and improve function.

SYMPTOMS

- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again
- Upsetting dreams or nightmares about the traumatic event
- Negative thoughts about yourself, or other people
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory problems
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Trouble sleeping

CAUSES

- A single stressful experience or stressful experiences, including the amount and severity of trauma you've gone through in your life
- Inherited mental health risks, such as a family history of anxiety and depression
- Inherited features of your personality — often called your temperament
- The way your brain regulates the chemicals and hormones your body releases in response to stress

WHEN TO SEEK HELP Symptoms of PTSD usually begin within 3 months of the traumatic event, but occasionally emerge years afterward. Symptoms must last more than an month to be considered PTSD. PTSD is often accompanied by substance use, depression, or anxiety disorder.

WHAT YOU CAN DO **Medications.** Although there is no one medication that can treat all cases of PTSD. The effective combination of psychotherapy and medication should be used together to reduce symptoms. Given the common co-occurrence of depression, related anxiety disorders, aggression and impulsivity selecting medications that address these problems is recommended. **Psychotherapy.** People with PTSD respond better to structured interventions rather than unstructured, supportive therapies.