



Social phobia

What is social phobia?

Social phobia makes a person feel uneasy around others. It is an anxiety disorder. People who live with this have a fear of being noticed. They worry about doing things that might embarrass them. This can last for days before an event happens. The fear may get in the way of daily life. It is hard for some people who have this to make friends.

Most people who live with social phobias know their fears may not make sense. But they cannot control the fear. Some people living with social phobias are afraid of a specific activity. It could be talking to new people. Others have a more general fear. They may not be able to be around people they don't know. They can only be with family.

People living with social phobia may have signs such as:

- Blushing.
- Sweating.
- Shaking.
- Upset stomach.
- Problems speaking.

These things make people with the disorder even more uneasy.

How to get help

Social phobia can be treated. See your doctor. A doctor can tell if you might have social phobia. Your doctor may send you to a mental health specialist.

How is it treated?

This disorder is treated with:

- Medication.
- Therapy.
- Both.

The right treatment helps many people overcome their fears. And it helps them have a better sense of well-being.

Medication

Medications will not cure social phobia. They can help control it. The medicines used are:

- Antidepressants.
- Anti-anxiety drugs.

Therapy

A “talk therapy” called cognitive behavior therapy helps treat social phobias. It helps people change:

- Actions.
- Thoughts about their fears and anxiety.

Other treatments can help

- Join a support group. This helps some people.
- Talk with someone you trust. This should not take the place of getting care from a specialist.
- Learn how to manage stress.
- Get exercise.

Check with your doctor before you take medicines. Some can make this disorder worse.

Get help right away if you are in crisis! Always call 911 if you have an emergency.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.