

## Patient Information about PTSD

<http://www.mentalhealthchannel.net/patient-information-ptsd/index.shtml>

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a severe anxiety disorder caused by witnessing or experiencing a mental, emotional, or physical trauma that results in feelings of intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Extreme stress can occur when a person experiences serious harm or the threat of harm, or witnesses someone else being harmed or threatened.

PTSD can result from abuse, natural or manmade catastrophes, violent attacks, accidents, or war and war-related activities. Combat veterans and victims of violent crime have the highest risk for posttraumatic stress disorder. This mental health disorder may occur along with other types of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, and OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder).

Here are some questions to ask your doctor (e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist) about posttraumatic stress disorder. **Print this page**, mark the questions you would like to have answered, and bring it with you to your next appointment. The more you and your family members or caregivers know about PTSD, the easier it will be to develop an effective treatment plan.

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Are there different types of PTSD?
- Why do you suspect that I have PTSD?
- What do you suspect is the underlying cause for my posttraumatic stress disorder?
- Why do some people develop PTSD while others who experience similar circumstances do not?
- How will having this mental illness affect my daily life?
- What are the most common signs and symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder?
- What complications are associated with PTSD?
- What should I do if my symptoms worsen or if I develop new symptoms or complications?  
**Telephone number to call:**
- How will my condition be diagnosed?
- What types of tests will be performed to determine for sure if I have PTSD?

- Am I at increased risk for other mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety disorder, or obsessive-compulsive disorder?
- How can I reduce my risk for alcohol abuse and drug abuse?
- If I do have posttraumatic stress disorder, how will my condition be treated?
- Will my treatment involve therapy and/or medications?
- What are the side effects of any PTSD medications you might prescribe?
- What should I do if I experience severe side effects?  
**Telephone number to call:**
- How will my condition be monitored during treatment?
- How long might my treatment last? Is PTSD a chronic condition?
- If this treatment is unsuccessful or my condition worsens, what other types of treatment are available?
- In addition to psychotherapy and medication, are there any alternative treatments that might be effective?
- What are the long-term consequences of untreated PTSD?
- Am I at increased risk for PTSD recurrence? If so, how can I reduce this risk?
- Can you recommend any support groups or resources for people who have PTSD and their families?
- Can you recommend any sources for additional information about posttraumatic stress disorder?
- Next appointment:**  
Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Notes/Additional Information**