

Home Care: Non-Medical, Personal Aide Services

 lighthousehc.com/Resources.php



LIGHTHOUSE HOME CARE

Knowledge Center

As a service from us to you: we have gathered thousands of health information articles. All the articles are authoritatively sourced, constantly updated, bi-lingual, and searchable. Please come back any time you want straightforward, correct answers to health information questions.

Mental Disorders

What are mental disorders?

Mental disorders (or mental illnesses) are conditions that affect your thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior. They may happen over a short period of time or come and go. Some can be chronic (long-lasting). They can affect your ability to relate to others and function each day..

What are some types of mental disorders?

There are many different types of mental disorders. Some common ones include:

- Anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobias
- Depression, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia

What causes mental disorders?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as:

- Your genes and family history
- Your life experiences, such as stress or a history of abuse, especially if they happen in childhood
- Biological factors such as chemical imbalances in the brain
- A traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Prenatal (before birth) exposure to viruses, toxic chemicals, or other substances such as alcohol and drugs.
- Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
- Having a serious medical condition like cancer
- Having few friends, and feeling lonely or isolated

Mental disorders are not caused by character flaws. They have nothing to do with being lazy or weak.

Who is at risk for mental disorders?

Mental disorders are common. Many Americans will be diagnosed with a mental disorder at some time in their life.

How are mental disorders diagnosed?

The steps to getting a diagnosis include:

- A medical history

- A physical exam and possibly lab tests, if your provider thinks that other medical conditions could be causing your symptoms
- A psychological evaluation. You will answer questions about your thinking, feelings, and behaviors.

What are the treatments for mental disorders?

Treatment depends on which mental disorder you have and how serious it is. You and your provider will work on a treatment plan just for you. It usually involves some type of therapy. You may also take medicines. Some people also need social support and education on managing their condition.

In some cases, you may need more intensive treatment. You may need to go to a psychiatric hospital. This could be because your mental illness is severe. Or it could be because you are at risk of hurting yourself or someone else. In the hospital, you will get counseling, group discussions, and activities with mental health professionals and other patients.

Occupational Health

Occupational health problems occur at work or because of the kind of work you do. These problems can include:

- Cuts, fractures (broken bones), and sprains and strains
- Loss of limbs
- Repetitive motion disorders
- Hearing problems caused by exposure to noise
- Vision problems
- Illness caused by breathing, touching, or swallowing unsafe substances
- Illness caused by exposure to radiation
- Exposure to germs in health care settings

Good job safety and prevention practices can reduce your risk of these problems. Try to stay fit, reduce stress, set up your work area properly, and use the right equipment and gear.

Rural Health Concerns

Around 15% of people in the United States live in rural areas. There are many different reasons why you might choose to live in a rural community. You may want a lower cost of living and a slower pace of life. You may enjoy having access to big, open spaces for recreation. Rural areas are less crowded and can offer more privacy. You may choose a rural area so that you can live near your family and friends.

But there are also challenges to living in a rural area, including when it comes to taking care of your health. Compared to urban areas, rural communities tend to have:

- Higher poverty rates.
- A higher percentage of older adults, who are more likely to have chronic health problems.
- More residents without health insurance.
- Less access to health care. For example, clinics and hospitals may be far away.
- Higher rates of certain substance use, such as cigarette smoking and opioid and methamphetamine misuse.
- Higher rates of chronic health problems such as high blood pressure and obesity.
- More exposure to environmental hazards, such as chemicals used for farming.

There are solutions to deal with these problems. A few examples include:

- Clinics offering telehealth to provide care for people who live far away from specialists or can't easily get to their providers' offices.
- Local public health agencies working with their communities to promote healthy living. They can provide wellness and exercise classes and start a farmer's market.
- Local governments adding bike lanes and trails to encourage people to bike and walk.
- Rural schools can offer counseling and mental health services for their students.

Understanding Medical Research

Almost every day, new findings from medical research are published in scientific journals. These journal articles often become sources for news stories. They can be important tools in helping you manage your health. But it's not always easy to understand them and know what they mean for your life. For example:

- What you hear about a study may not explain how it fits into the bigger picture.
- Sometimes the results of one study seem to disagree with the results of another study. That could be because the studies could have different designs and asked different questions. The news stories don't always explain this.
- Sometimes the studies are very small, and researchers need to do more studies to confirm the results. But the news stories about these small studies may not highlight this.

So it's important to think carefully when reading or listening to reports of new medical findings. Here are some questions that can help you evaluate that information:

- Was the study in animals or humans? Getting certain results in animals may not mean that you get those same results in humans.
- Were the people in the study similar to you in ways that may matter, such as age, race, or sex?
- How big was the study? Larger studies may get more reliable results than smaller studies.
- How long did the study last? For example, studies testing medicines need to be long enough to show long-term benefits or risks.
- What kind of study was it? Clinical trials, especially randomized controlled trials, give the clearest information about whether a treatment is effective and safe in humans. In randomized controlled trials, the people in the study are randomly divided into separate groups that get different treatments. This helps prevent bias in the results.
- Where was the research done?
- If a new treatment was being tested, what were the side effects? How common were they?
- How do the results from the study compare with previous studies? If the new study had different results, then more studies would be needed to confirm these results.
- Who paid for the research? Sometimes the people paying for the research could profit financially if the study gets certain results.
- Who is reporting the results? Do they have a certain bias?

It can be helpful to stay informed about new medical findings. But it's good to have some skepticism. Keep these questions in mind the next time you hear about a big new medical breakthrough.