Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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En Español (Spanish Version)

For most people, PTSD starts within about three months of the traumatic event. For some people, signs of PTSD don't show up until years later. PTSD can happen to anyone at any age. Even children can have it. Some people get better within six months, while others may have the disorder for much longer. Symptoms of PTSD may vary in frequency and intensity over time, and may fall into three categories:

- **Re-experiencing the event:**
  - Dreams/nightmares
  - Flashbacks
  - Anxious reactions to reminders of the event
  - Hallucinations
- **Avoidance:**
  - Avoiding close emotional contact with family and friends
  - Avoiding people or places that are reminders of the event
  - Loss of memory about the event
  - Feelings of detachment, numbness
- **Arousal:**
  - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
  - Anger and irritability
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Being easily startled

Physical symptoms may also occur such as:

- Stomach and digestive problems
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Immune system problems

People with PTSD may also abuse alcohol or drugs.

**REFERENCES:**

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR)*. American Psychiatric Association; 2000.


