

River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



PAIN AND ANXIETY

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1. My doctor diagnosed me with “anxiety disorder” but I told him that my pain caused my anxiety. If my pain is treated, will my anxiety go away?



Chronic pain and anxiety are very common in the general population. That means it is very likely that some people will experience both conditions. Physicians have also begun to recognize that chronic pain may cause or worsen other medical or psychiatric problems, especially anxiety.

2. What is the difference between anxiety and panic attacks?

Panic attacks are an extreme form of anxiety. Usually, a sudden fear of “impending doom” is accompanied by physical symptoms such as a racing heart and pressure in the chest. Panic attacks generally last a few minutes, whereas anxiety can last for days, weeks, or become persistent.

3. How is anxiety diagnosed? Doesn't everyone have stress?

Anxiety or fear related to a specific stressful situation (like an important test in school) is normal. Sometimes prolonged anxiety can occur after a extremely stressful situation such as a recent death. An anxiety disorder is diagnosed when anxiety is persistent and not related to specific stressors. Repetitive episodes of stressful situations can also cause persistent anxiety.

4. Are there different kinds of anxiety?

Yes, anxiety is diagnosed in several different forms. Generalized anxiety disorder is a condition that is diagnosed when anxiety is persistent without a specific cause. Other forms of anxiety conditions include post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and “phobias.” An example of a phobia is the fear of heights, “acrophobia.”

5. When should I see a doctor about anxiety?

Persistent (greater than 3 months) or severe, recurrent anxiety should be evaluated by a physician. In addition to the types of anxiety already discussed, a number of medical causes of anxiety must be considered as well. Some of these conditions include heart disease, hormone problems (such as thyroid disorders), and lung conditions.

6. Can medications cause anxiety?

Certain medications are known to cause nervousness or anxiety. In particular, over-the-counter stimulants used to stay awake or diet can cause severe anxiety. Decongestants, and even anti-histamines can cause anxiety in some individuals. Many prescription medications such as pain medications and antidepressants cause anxiety in certain individuals.

7. How will I know if it is the medication causing my anxiety?

If the anxiety problem is recent, and you have started a new medication, or made medication adjustments, it is possible that the medication is causing your anxiety. A specific discussion with your doctor will be necessary to determine the best course of action to take.

8. How is anxiety treated?

Once the proper diagnosis is made, anxiety treatments can be broadly categorized between medications, psychotherapy, and lifestyle adjustments. Lifestyle adjustments include avoiding caffeine, getting enough sleep, and a program of regular exercise. Your doctor may also refer you to a counselor or other mental health provider for psychological treatments. Medications are sometimes required and can be very helpful.

9. Which is the best medication for anxiety?

A number of different medications are available for the treatment of anxiety. The two basic classes of medications include the serotonin drugs (serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, also known as SSRI's and SNRI's), and the benzodiazepines. Many serotonin drugs are available, and most people are able to find one which will work well for them. The added benefit to using a serotonin drug is that they are useful in treating depression.

10. After my injection, I stopped my pain medication and the next day felt a lot of anxiety. Was that caused by my injection?

There are two possible reasons for your symptoms. Stopping pain medication can lead to withdrawal symptoms of anxiety, heart palpitations, sweating, diarrhea, and insomnia. Corticosteroids, which are often present in injections, can cause anxiety, jitteriness, and nervousness for several days after an injection. Consultation with your doctor regarding the use of your medications and potential side effects of injections is very important prior to your injection.