

Common Health Anxiety Compulsions and Rituals

Compulsions/Rituals/Safety Behaviors
Asking a loved one about their symptoms more than necessary
Asking for extra medications
Asking friends and family for reassurance about my health
Asking friends, family, or medical providers to examine my body more than typical
Asking a loved one to engage in decontamination activities or prevention activities
Asking a loved one to go to the doctor with you to make certain the medical results are clearly described
Asking loved ones reassurance seeking questions (e.g., Do you think I'm sick? Am I going to be okay?)
Asking loved ones to inspect food, medicine, or anything that is ingestible
Asking medical professionals for unnecessary advice
Asking others to check your pulse, heart rate, or oxygen levels
Asking people if they noticed any cognitive, emotional, or behavioral changes that would suggest a neurological issue
Avoiding any object with the "Proposition 65" California cancer warning on it
Avoiding eating or smelling food that triggers the fear
Avoiding healthy people fearful you will get them sick, or that they will make you sicker
Avoiding looking at body parts that trigger the fear
Avoiding looking at lab results
Avoiding looking at serious medical information online or in shows
Avoiding medical appointments
Avoiding physical activities that increase breathing or body awareness
Avoiding saying names of certain illnesses and diseases for fear of creating them into existence
Avoiding thinking about illnesses (or use of intentional distraction activities)
Avoiding anything that reminds me of vomit or nauseous symptoms
Avoiding being around sick people
Avoiding healthy, consensual sexual activity that might lead to unplanned pregnancies, STIs, internal injuries, or other side effects of sexual activities
Avoiding shows, social media, movies, news that showcase or discuss diseases
Avoiding needle procedures
Body symptom checking
Excessive behavioral body symptom checking (e.g., feeling for bumps, feeling for structural abnormalities, examining body in the mirror)

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Compulsions/Rituals/Safety Behaviors

Excessive examination of urine, blood, or fecal matter to self-diagnose
Excessive mental symptom checking (paying extra attention to breathing, body sounds, internal feelings associated with digestion, urination, defecation)
Excessive sharing about symptoms
Excessive visits to the ER or your medical provider
Excessive watching or reading about medical cases to compare yourself
Getting excessive or unnecessary medical procedures (e.g., multiple MRIs, CTs, spinal tap)
Looking stuff up online
Monitoring memory to assess for cognitive deficits, Alzheimer's, etc.
Monitoring mental or verbal slip ups to prove cognitive decline
Monitoring pulse, heart rate, or oxygen levels
Ordering extra medical supplies for kids
Overhydrating
Performing certain tasks, rituals, activities in a certain way to make sure bad medical things don't occur
Pinching hands or feet to check for sensation vs. numb
Planning to call 911 or go to ER if bleeding does not stop
Reading food or medication labels repetitively/repetitively checking expiration dates
Rejecting medical advice or results (or seeking out 3rd, 4th, 5th opinions)
Requesting extra or unnecessary medical procedures
Researching symptoms, diseases, lab work, or medical procedures online
Rubbing body parts publicly with the intent of getting someone's attention
Seeking out serious medical information online or in television shows to relate it to myself
Taking excessive COVID tests
Taking excessive pregnancy tests
Telling self over and over it's going to be okay
Thinking about and overvaluing rare medical events, tragedies, or case studies and applying them to yourself
Throwing away "good" food because close to expiration date, or its sight, smell, proximity to other foods scares you for some reason that's not rooted in facts
Visualizing your death or leaving family behind over and over
Warning loved one of possible upcoming ailments

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