

Are You a Hypochondriac?

By Amy Scholten, MPH

Hypochondriacs are people who worry obsessively about their health and often believe that they are seriously ill, despite the reassurances of their doctors. The following survey has been designed to give you some insight into whether or not you may have a problem with hypochondria. Please keep in mind that this is a *general* assessment, not a diagnostic tool. Please see a mental health care provider for more in-depth testing.

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and select the statement that best describes your situation. When finished, interpret your score at the bottom of the page.

1. The following statement best describes how I feel about my health:

- a) I worry about my health more than most people
- b) I try to be sensible about my health, but I'm not preoccupied with it
- c) I don't worry about my health much

2. When I learn about an illness (or the symptoms of an illness):

- a) I don't worry about it affecting me
- b) I try to do what I can to prevent the illness, if possible, but don't obsess about it
- c) I tend to worry that I may have or develop the same illness

3. The statement that best describes how I tend to react to changes/symptoms in my body is:

- a) I'm very healthy and rarely notice or worry about any changes or symptoms in my body
- b) I tend to be alarmed by changes or symptoms and often worry that I have a serious illness
- c) If changes or symptoms concern me, I see the doctor to rule out anything serious

4. When my doctor reassures me that there's nothing to worry about:

- a) I tend to think he/she is lying or hasn't been thorough
- b) I feel relieved, but if I keep having bothersome symptoms I will seek a second opinion.
- c) His/her medical opinion is usually enough reassurance for me

5. I would describe myself as:

- a) Generally healthy
- b) Having some health issues

c) Very worried about symptoms that doctors have not been able to diagnose

6. I get my medical information from:

- a) Mostly health practitioners, when I feel I need it
- b) Mostly health practitioners and media that I stumble across
- c) Everything I can get my hands on (books, magazines, the internet, etc) – because I always worry about what could go wrong with my health

7. When people tell me I look healthy:

- a) I feel thankful and appreciative
- b) I can take it or leave it
- c) I get irritated because they have no idea how sick I really am

8. When I have a headache, I usually:

- a) Try to do something to relieve it
- b) Worry that I might have a brain tumor or some other serious illness
- c) See it as a sign that something may be off balance with my body and get it checked if it persists

9. When I have medical tests:

- a) I rarely trust the results and want more tests
- b) I trust the results
- c) I ask lots of questions

10. I focus on my health:

- a) Only when I start having symptoms
- b) On a fairly regular basis, with the intent of doing what I need to do to stay healthy
- c) So often that it's hard for me to think about anything else

11. When I wake up in the morning:

- a) I get up and get going
- b) I start worrying about my body right away
- c) I go for a walk

12. My attitude toward illness is:

- a) I'm consumed with fear about illness
- b) I do what I can to prevent illness, if possible, but I'm not obsessed with it

c) I live my life and don't worry about illness

Hypochondriac Score

Based on the 12 questions above, circle any answers below that were true for you. Add the total in the right column.	Your Total Score: _____
1 - a 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - c 7 - c 8 - b 9 - a 10 - c 11 - b 12 - a	What your scores means: If you scored 1-2 points, you have some health anxiety issues. If you scored 3 or more points, you are probably a hypochondriac.

Source:

Copyright © Amy Scholten, MPH, Inner Medicine Publishing. All rights reserved.

Biography

Amy Scholten, MPH, has a Master of Public Health in health promotion and education from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition from Framingham State College. She is a freelance health writer and has taught stress management at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY, USA.