

ANXIETY

Information and Coping Tips

Occasional anxiety is a part of life—it's a natural reaction to events or situations that are frightening or stressful.

The start of a new school year...waiting to hear if you passed the test, made the team, or got the job. All of these things can make us feel nervous and anxious.

When we feel anxious, our bodies often react by releasing adrenaline, which can increase our heart rate and breathing. For most people, the feelings of anxiety go away when the situation that caused it is over, or the problem is resolved.

OVERLY ANXIOUS?

Some people suffer from anxiety that's persistent. Their anxiety affects their well-being and interferes with their day-to-day lives. These people often:

- ▶ worry excessively and become fearful
- ▶ have difficulty sleeping and concentrating
- ▶ feel irritable, restless, and on edge

If this sounds like you, talk to a counselor or doctor. They can help you explore ways to lessen your anxiety.

WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of severe fear and distress. A person who's having a panic attack may have chest pains, nausea, sweating, shaking, intense feelings of fear—and feel like something is physically wrong. *If you experience a panic attack, take deep breaths and get to a safe place until it passes.*

WAYS TO COPE WITH ANXIETY

The following calming techniques can help with anxiety symptoms, including panic attacks.

Take deep breaths

Close your eyes and relax all of your muscles. Take a deep cleansing breath, slowly count to four, and then slowly release your breath—blowing away the anxiety and stress. Repeat. *Deep breathing is very effective in helping you feel calm and relaxed.*

Practice mindfulness

Notice things you don't normally pay attention to. Be aware of the sights, sounds, smells, and textures around you. Throughout the day, remind yourself to be fully present, and to focus on the "now."

Get plenty of sleep

Getting adequate sleep is extremely important. Unplug and relax an hour before bedtime. Read a book, take a bath, meditate, or listen to soft music.

Visualize

Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene, adding as many details as you can. Even better, pair your visualization with deep breathing.

Exercise

Physical exercise reduces stress and releases chemicals that make you feel better. Ride a bike, do yoga, shoot hoops, or take a long walk.

Try guided meditation

With guided meditation, a voice helps you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditations are available on streaming services like Spotify, and on apps like Meditation Studio and Calm.

If anxiety is affecting your schoolwork or causing you problems, confide in someone you trust. Talk to a family member, counselor, or doctor and ask for their help.