

4 There are ways to manage stress.

The effects of stress tend to build up over time. Taking practical steps to manage your stress can reduce or prevent these effects. The following are some tips that may help you to cope with stress:

- **Recognize the Signs** of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- **Talk to Your Doctor or Health Care Provider.** Get proper health care for existing or new health problems.
- **Get Regular Exercise.** Just 30 minutes per day of walking can help boost your mood and reduce stress.
- **Try a Relaxing Activity.** Explore stress coping programs, which may incorporate meditation, yoga, tai chi, or other gentle exercises. For some stress-related conditions, these approaches are used in addition to other forms of treatment. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy and relaxing activities. Learn more about these techniques on the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) website at (www.nccih.nih.gov/health/stress).
- **Set Goals and Priorities.** Decide what must get done and what can wait, and learn to say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload. Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Stay Connected** with people who can provide emotional and other support. To reduce stress, ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations.
- **Consider a Clinical Trial.** Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), NCCIH, and other research facilities across the country are studying the causes and effects of psychological stress, and stress management techniques. You can learn more about studies that are recruiting by visiting www.nimh.nih.gov/joinastudy or www.clinicaltrials.gov (keyword: stress).

5 If you're overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.

You should seek help right away if you have suicidal thoughts, are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, or are using drugs or alcohol to cope. Your doctor may be able to provide a recommendation. You can find resources to help you find a mental health provider by visiting www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Anyone experiencing severe or long-term, unrelenting stress can become overwhelmed. If you or a loved one is having thoughts of suicide, call the toll-free **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>) at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to anyone. All calls are confidential.

For More Information

For more information on conditions that affect mental health, resources, and research, visit www.mentalhealth.gov, or the NIMH website at www.nimh.nih.gov. In addition, the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus service has information on a wide variety of health topics, including conditions that affect mental health.



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UNDERSTANDING TEST Anxiety

Apprehension

Apprehension of not living up to other's expectations of you.

Grades

Allowing grades to determine your personal worth

Fear

Fear of losing affection of significant people in your life if you don't succeed.

Control

Feel helpless with no internal locus of control – no control over what happens.

SOLUTIONS

Goals

Set your own goals and try to attain them. Don't let others determine your aspirations.

Guides

Understand that a grade is only an approximate measure of performance. Grades don't determine your worth as a person; they are only a guide to help you determine what you need to review.

Friends

Know that people like you for a variety of reasons which have nothing to do with the grade you receive on a test.

Habits

Take control of your life and improve your study habits. Prepare for your next test and see the relationship between the amount and quality of your studying and the grade you receive.

TIPS to REDUCE ANXIETY

Relax

Muscle relaxation exercises help you control the physical symptoms of test anxiety.

Accept

Face your fears and accept that you have a problem. This way you can eliminate the cause. Define your fear and determine its origin.

Focus

Give total attention to the test. While papers are being passed out, silently review what you have learned. Fight distractions.

Think Positively

Engage in positive self-talk and replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

Improve

Improve the way you prepare for tests.

Learn

Learn to recognize signs that you are becoming anxious and then try relaxation exercises.

Dress

Dress comfortably for tests. Choose layers of loose-fitting clothing.

Normalize

Develop a test-day tradition – like a "lucky" outfit!

WHAT IS...ANXIETY?

Anxiety is when something causes us to feel nervous and afraid. People who have an Anxiety disorder have a more intense reaction. It can start to impact their grades, behaviors, and relationships with others.



ANXIETY CAN BE CAUSED BY A NUMBER OF THINGS. SOME PEOPLE EXPERIENCE IT FOR NO REASON. OTHERS ARE TRIGGERED BY TESTS, BEING ON STAGE, OR BEING AROUND OTHER PEOPLE. SUFFERING FROM ANXIETY CAN MAKE YOU WANT TO AVOID CERTAIN SITUATIONS AND PLACES.

Symptoms

- Worrying a lot
- Feeling very nervous and afraid
- Trouble breathing
- Numbness or tingling in your hands or feet
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling very weak
- Sweating
- Headache or stomach ache
- Heart beating really fast
- Muscles feel really tight
- Having a lot of thoughts going through your head

Treating Anxiety

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY

A therapist can help someone suffering from anxiety learn how to better cope with their symptoms so that they are not as intense. It can also be helpful to talk about the triggers to see why they cause anxiety for that person.

MEDICATION

Medication won't cure anxiety, but it can help to decrease the symptoms.

SELF-HELP

Someone suffering from anxiety can help lessen some of their symptoms by doing certain things on their own. Doing relaxation, eating healthy, and getting sleep are helpful ways to decrease anxiety.

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR ANXIETY IS MORE THAN IT SHOULD BE, OR IF IT STARTS AFFECTING CERTAIN AREAS OF YOUR LIFE, TALK TO A PARENT OR A TRUSTED ADULT!



MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE

Myths or misinformation about suicide, or the lack of information altogether, often means that desperate people can't get the help they need in times of crisis. Being well-informed about suicide can help you save your own life, or the life of someone you know or love!

MYTH

People who talk about suicide rarely actually do it.

(This relates to the belief that people are just seeking attention or are bluffing.)

People who die by suicide often give a clue or warning of their intentions. The majority of people who attempt suicide say or do something to express their intention before they act. Always treat even subtle threats seriously.

MYTH

The suicidal person wants to die and there is nothing anyone can do about it.

Often the suicidal person feels ambivalent about dying. People usually don't want to die; they rather want to end their horrible emotional pain. You can help by identifying the potentially suicidal person and talking to them about it.

MYTH

A person who has attempted suicide will always have thoughts of suicide.

While a previous suicide attempt statistically increases the chance of another one, many people never attempt again. Often a suicide attempt is made during a particularly stressful period, or during periods of major depression. With intervention and support a person may cease feeling suicidal.

MYTH

If you ask a person directly, "Do you feel like killing yourself?" This will lead to a suicide attempt.

Speaking to a person directly about suicidal intent will usually relieve the anxiety surrounding the feeling, and act as a deterrent to the suicidal behaviour. You don't create self-destructive feelings in another person simply by talking about suicide. If the thought was going to be there, it was there before you asked about it.

MYTH

A good job and stable relationships prevent people from contemplating suicide.

People of all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds can feel suicidal. Although positive social connections are a major protective factor, biological, social, psychological, and spiritual risk factors do contribute as well.

Top 8 Reasons why Teens Try Alcohol and Drugs

Other People — Teenagers see lots of people using various substances. They see their parents and other adults drinking alcohol, smoking, and, sometimes, abusing other substances. Also, the teen social scene often revolves around drinking and smoking pot. Sometimes friends urge one another to try a drink or smoke something, but it's just as common for teens to start using a substance because it's readily available and they see all their friends enjoying it. In their minds, they see drug use as a part of the normal teenage experience.

Popular Media — Forty-seven percent of teens agreed that movies and TV shows make drugs seem like an OK thing to do, according to a 2011 study. Not surprisingly, 12- to 17-year-olds who viewed three or more "R" rated movies per month were seven times more likely to smoke cigarettes, six times more likely to use marijuana, and five times more likely to drink alcohol, compared to those who hadn't watched "R" rated films (Amy Khan 2005).

Escape and Self-Medication — When teens are unhappy and can't find a healthy outlet for their frustration or a trusted confidant, they may turn to chemicals for solace. Depending on what substance they're using, they may feel blissfully oblivious, wonderfully happy, or energized and confident. The often rough teenage years can take an emotional toll on children, sometimes even causing depression, so when teens are given a chance to take something to make them feel better, many can't resist.

Boredom — Teens who can't tolerate being alone, have trouble keeping themselves occupied, or crave excitement are prime candidates for substance abuse. Not only do alcohol and marijuana give them something to do, but those substances help fill the internal void they feel. Further, they provide a common ground for interacting with like-minded teens, a way to instantly bond with a group of kids.

Rebellion — Different rebellious teens choose different substances to use based on their personalities. Alcohol is the drug of choice for the angry teenager because it frees him to behave aggressively. Methamphetamine, or meth, also encourage aggressive, violent behavior, and can be far more dangerous and potent than alcohol. Marijuana, on the other hand, often seems to reduce aggression and is more of an avoidance drug. LSD and hallucinogens are also escape drugs, often used by young people who feel misunderstood and may long to escape to a more idealistic, kind world. Smoking cigarettes can be a form of rebellion to flaunt their independence and make their parents angry. The reasons for teenage drug-use are as complex as teenagers themselves.

Instant Gratification — Drugs and alcohol work quickly. The initial effects feel really good. Teenagers turn to drug use because they see it as a short-term shortcut to happiness.

Lack of Confidence — Many shy teenagers who lack confidence report that they'll do things under the influence of alcohol or drugs that they might not otherwise. This is part of the appeal of drugs and alcohol even for relatively self-confident teens; you have the courage to dance if you're a bad dancer, or sing at the top of your lungs even if you have a terrible voice, or kiss the girl you're attracted to. And alcohol and other drugs tend not only to loosen your inhibitions but to alleviate social anxiety. Not only do you have something in common with the other people around you, but there's the mentality that if you do anything or say anything stupid, everyone will just think you had too many drinks or smoked too much weed.

Misinformation — Perhaps the most avoidable cause of substance abuse is inaccurate information about drugs and alcohol. Nearly every teenager has friends who claim to be experts on various recreational substances, and they're happy to assure her that the risks are minimal. Educate your teenager about drug use, so they get the real facts about the dangers of drug use.