



Coping with Anxiety

Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life, but sometimes treatment may be necessary. People with anxiety disorders often experience intense worry and fear over everyday situations. Anxiety disorders often involve frequent episodes of sudden, intense anxiety that can reach a peak known as a panic attack. Anxiety takes many forms, ranging from generalized feelings of worry to intense bouts of fear or panic. These feelings can interfere with daily life and be difficult to control.

You may be experiencing anxiety without even realizing it. You may be worried about things that never used to bother you, or you may be afraid that something bad might happen to your loved ones. These thoughts can nag at you even when you're trying to focus on work, spending time with your family, or doing things that make you happy.

What Is Anxiety?

The first thing to know is that there's nothing wrong with feeling anxious. Anxiety is common, and everyone experiences it from time to time. However, when these feelings become difficult to control and begin to take over your thoughts, it may be time to ask for help.

Everyone's anxiety is different. You may feel only some of these things or have different worries. What matters is that you can get help for your anxiety.

Most people think that anxiety is all about panic attacks, shaky knees, or a racing heart. Anxiety is much more than that, though. Symptoms may include any of the following:

- Feeling like something bad is going to happen.
- Feeling weak or tired.
- Having trouble concentrating or thinking.
- Having trouble sleeping.
- Having an upset stomach.
- Wanting to avoid people or things that make you feel worried.



How Is Anxiety Treated?

Talking about anxiety can be scary, but it's okay to seek help. Getting help is a sign that you want to get back to your best self. Learning how to treat and manage your anxiety can help you get back to the things you enjoy. It may be time to get help if you:

- Have trouble concentrating or thinking.
- Feel like you're worrying too much.
- Feel like your anxiety is interfering with work or loved ones.
- Feel like your anxiety is hard to control.
- Feel consistently depressed or down for at least two weeks.

It can be difficult to talk about anxiety. Start by talking to someone you trust. This can be a partner, friend, doctor, or someone else. Sometimes just talking to someone can be helpful. You can ask yourself these questions to understand your stress and anxiety better.



Which Is It?

Everyday Anxiety

can occur because of specific events or tasks. Examples include:

- Worrying about paying bills.
- Feeling stressed at work or from a life event.
- Feeling shy or embarrassed in awkward social situations.
- Getting a case of nerves before a job interview, first date, or a big presentation.
- Having a bad day from time to time.

Troublesome Anxiety

can occur for seemingly no reason. Examples include:

- Feeling constant worry every day for no reason.
- Avoiding going out for fear of being judged or embarrassed.
- Experiencing a panic attack that comes out of nowhere.
- Developing a fear of having panic attacks.
- Feeling like things are never going to get better.

Depending on how much anxiety you're feeling, your doctor may want you to see a counselor or therapist. This will give you a safe place to talk about your fears and worries. A mental health professional can give you skills to help control your anxiety.

Some people find that medicine helps with their anxiety. Any medicine for anxiety has to come from your doctor. They'll have an idea of what may or may not work for you.



**Things
You Can Do
Now**

While you wait to see a doctor or other medical professional, there are ways to manage your anxiety. Here are some ideas:

- Try positive self-talk. If you find yourself having a negative thought, see if there's a way to turn it around. Remind yourself that you won't feel this way forever.
- Take time for yourself. Whether it's doing something you love or just having some quiet time, make sure you're taking care of yourself. You can also try meditation, prayer, or listening to music.
- Eat healthy and exercise. Taking care of your body can help your mental health. Try not to skip meals or eat much more than usual. Drink plenty of water. Stay active.
- Make a list of things you can and can't control. Focus on the things you can control. If you start thinking about things that are out of your control, try to refocus your thoughts on what you can control.
- Don't use drugs and limit how much alcohol you're drinking. While drugs and alcohol may make you feel better in the short term, they can increase negative feelings over time.

Having anxiety doesn't mean you have to feel worried all the time. With the right kind of help, you can get your anxiety under control.

If you ever think about hurting yourself or others, you should get help right away. Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, or chat at suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat. Someone will be able to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, National Institute of Mental Health, Mayo Clinic