

Help for Anxiety

For many people, the last year has led to an increase in feelings of anxiety. COVID-19, distancing from loved ones, and political and social unrest have made for more fearful times.

In some people, anxiety may become a persistent condition. Constant, exaggerated worrisome thoughts and tension about routine life events and activities for at least six months may be a sign of General Anxiety Disorder. Other common symptoms include:

- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Trembling or muscle tension
- ▶ Frequent headaches
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Panic attacks — a sudden episode of overwhelming fear that may include a racing heart or shortness of breath

Some people may experience social anxiety, which makes it difficult for them to participate in social events or spend time with others. In addition, people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression sometimes experience symptoms of anxiety.

Whether you experience short-term bouts of anxiety due to specific situations or have an anxiety disorder, these tips may help:

- ▶ **Have a plan.** If you know that you are going to be in a stressful situation, create strategies for handling it. It may be helpful to repeat a calming phrase, listen to a favorite piece of music, or carry a physical object — such as a polished stone — that you can touch when you start to feel overwhelmed.

- ▶ **Be honest.** Talk to trusted friends and loved ones when you are struggling with anxiety. Explain what specific situations may trigger your anxiety and ways that your friends can support you during an episode.
- ▶ **Seek help.** If anxiety is having an impact on your physical health and emotional well-being, talk to your doctor. LifeMatters is also available to provide counseling and support. Call anytime.

Source: The StayWell Company, LLC



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