

# Anxiety

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a term that describes a normal emotion we experience when faced with a threat, danger, or stressor. Mild anxiety, like just before a sporting competition, job interview or an exam, can help motivate us to perform well. When people become anxious, they typically experience various physiological sensations associated with the "fight or flight response", including:

- increased heart rate
- faster breathing
- muscle tension
- sweating
- "nervous energy"
- shakiness
- blurry/tunnel vision
- nausea or "butterflies" in the stomach

Feelings of anxiety are often an appropriate response to certain situations in life, such as job loss, financial stressors, and many life changes, and we usually only feel anxious for a short amount of time. These feelings are not considered "clinical anxiety", but are a part of everyday life. When anxiety becomes increasingly more frequent and intense, interferes with daily living and stops us from doing what we want to do, then it's a problem. This is what differentiates "clinical anxiety" from normal everyday experiences of anxiety. In Australia, it's estimated that 45 per cent of people will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. In any one year, around 1 million Australian adults have depression, and over 2 million have anxiety. (beyondblue)

## What is the treatment for Anxiety?

There are various treatment options for Anxiety disorders. Medical treatment can be provided by a GP or Psychiatrist, or people can be referred to a Psychologist, Counsellor or other appropriate health professional. Psychological therapy has been shown to be very effective in treating Anxiety disorders. With treatment and support, most people can learn to manage their anxiety and continue living their lives to their full potential. If Anxiety is impacting on your quality of life, please see your doctor.

## Do you know someone with Anxiety?

People who experience Anxiety disorders need support and

understanding. Telling someone to "calm down" or "get over it" isn't helpful and won't change anything; it's not that simple. Be patient, listen to the person's worries and concerns, and take them seriously. Intense Anxiety can be a very scary experience, especially if the person hasn't experienced it before. Symptoms of Anxiety can be improved with treatment, so it's important that the person gets the right help.

## 5 Tips to Help Manage Anxiety

### Regular exercise and a healthy diet:

Exercise and eating right is great a way to manage stress and anxiety. Try to aim for 30min of exercise and a balanced diet each day.



**Reduce stress:** Identify stressors in your life and, where possible, brainstorm solutions to reduce these. A change in lifestyle may be in order.

**Avoid stimulants:** Stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine and other drugs can increase symptoms of anxiety. You may be able to reduce your anxiety simply by reducing the amount of coffee, tea, energy drinks, soft drinks etc that you drink.

**Relaxation:** Make time to relax everyday, even when you aren't anxious. There are lots of different formal relaxation exercises you can try, but there are also everyday things that help people relax. Try going for a walk, listening to music or having a bubble bath.

**Talk it out:** If Anxiety is impacting on your quality of life, talk to someone about it. This could include a close friend, family member, a GP or a psychologist. Bottling things up doesn't help resolve your Anxiety.

If Anxiety is impacting on your quality of life, please see your doctor and contact Centacare NENW on 1800 372 826.