

INFORM Yourself

ANXIETY

You Did It!

Congratulations on completing the Focused Wellness program! This issue of *Inform Yourself* is meant to remind you of what you learned. You can draw on this information to help you stay on top of your health. You can also share the information with others. Having people around who understand your condition and how to support you can be a big help.



During your time in the Focused Wellness program, you learned about anxiety and how to manage it. Remember that occasional anxiety is normal, but you don't want it to get in the way of your everyday life. It's important to be aware of how you feel. If you have any of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks, it's time to talk to your health care provider:

- Feeling restless, on edge, or wound up
- Having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep; getting tired easily
- Not being able to control your worrying
- Chronic muscle aches, headaches, or upset stomach
- Trouble concentrating
- Fast heartbeat or breathing



Serious anxiety affects **more than 40 million** adults in the United States. That means you are not alone!

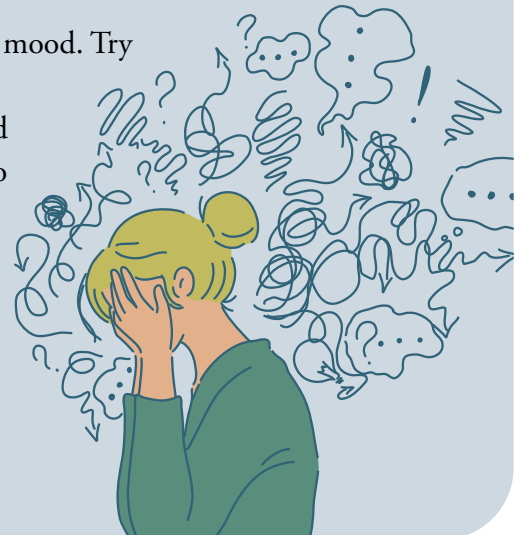
Your health care provider can help you keep your anxiety under control. They may recommend various forms of counseling or medication, or a combination of both.

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Sources: Mayo Clinic, National Institute of Mental Health

5 Tips for Coping with Anxiety

1. **Be physically active.** Exercise is a good way to lower stress and boost your mood. Try to get some movement most days of the week.
2. **Eat healthy foods.** A diet that includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fish may help lower anxiety. Caffeine can make anxiety symptoms worse, so cutting back on things like coffee and soda pop can help, too.
3. **Get enough sleep.** Most adults need 7 or more hours of sleep a night. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.
4. **Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and recreational drugs.** It may seem like these things help you relax, but they can actually cause or worsen anxiety.
5. **Socialize.** Being around friends and loved ones can help you feel better.

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Source: Mayo Clinic



Your Treatment Plan: The Path to Better Health

A treatment plan helps you minimize the effects of anxiety and feel your best. If you have a plan, make sure you work with your provider to keep it updated and maintain your progress. If you don't have one, talk to your provider about making one. Treatment plans usually include the following.

Self-monitoring

Keeping track of how you are feeling every day can help you find out if there are any patterns to what affects your mood. One way to track these patterns is by using a mood diary. Try to write in it at least once a day and more often if you can. Making several entries a day can help you trace your mood at different times. Make sure each entry includes the following:

- 1. Date and time
- 2. Your mood at that time or how it has changed since your last entry
- 3. What happened since your last entry. Include names of the people you were around, things you have done, and places you have gone.

Psychotherapy (talk therapy or counseling)

You may go to a therapist or counselor to learn how to manage your anxiety. You can learn new ways of thinking and how to change troubling thoughts. Keeping appointments for this type of treatment is just as

important as adhering to any medication you may be prescribed. You can learn more about medication on the back page.

Follow-up

Keeping follow-up appointments is a key way to make sure that all parts of your treatment plan are helping you as much as possible. It's also important to see your provider to make sure your anxiety is not affecting any other areas of your health. If you don't have an appointment scheduled but feel you need to speak with someone, make an appointment—and be sure to go to it!

You can share your treatment plan and other information about your condition with all your health care providers and caregivers by completing a form giving consent for them to see your health information. Talk with your health care provider to learn more about this.

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Source: HealthDay



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Goals for Working with Your Provider

The relationship you have with your health care provider is important! Keeping the following goals in mind can help make this a positive relationship.

- Keep your appointments with your health care provider. You should do this even if you feel fine when it is time for your appointment.
- Ask your health care provider questions if you don't understand something.
- Take all medications prescribed by your health care provider. Be sure to take them as directed.
- Talk with your health care provider about your symptoms and ways to manage them.
- Call your health care provider if you have problems.





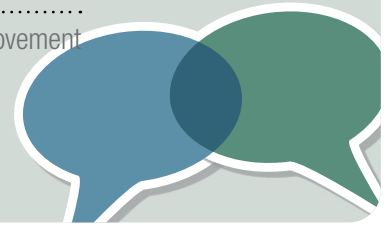
It's *Your* Health: Speak Up and Listen Up!

Remember that every time you visit your health care provider, it's *your* time to ask questions and get the answers you need to be the healthiest you can be.

- ☑ Express any concerns you have about your health.
- ☑ Make sure you understand the “whats”—*what* your health problem is, *what* you should do about it, and *what* steps to take next.
- ☑ Also ask your provider the “whys.” Sometimes understanding *why* you should do something will help motivate you to do it.
- ☑ If you don't understand something, ask your provider to tell you more or to explain it using different words.

If you have questions after you leave your appointment, you can call your health care provider's office. You can usually speak to a nurse or ask to leave a message for your provider. Your provider will call you back.

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Source: Institute for Healthcare Improvement



Managing Anxiety

It's important to follow your treatment plan, even when things are going well. This can help manage your anxiety and prevent complications. Managing triggers can also help reduce your anxiety and stress. Asking yourself the following questions can help you identify your triggers:

- Is there a situation I try to avoid?
- Do I avoid going certain places?
- What would make my day or activity less stressful?

Once you know your triggers, you can better prepare yourself for them. A health care provider can help you find a healthy way to face the things that trigger your anxiety. Being able to work around some of the things that trigger anxiety can make the day or activity less stressful from the start.

Preparing for things that may come up and having a plan for dealing with them can help you manage your anxiety in the moment and reduce worries about the future. For example, if you struggle with driving, make backup transportation plans for important appointments. If you have a child, prepare what you will do if your child is sick. Using a calendar to keep track of important dates and appointments can also help. Share your concerns with people you trust so they can help you when needed.

If you are in a situation where you feel like your anxiety is increasing, try practicing the 3-3-3 rule. This activity can help ground you.

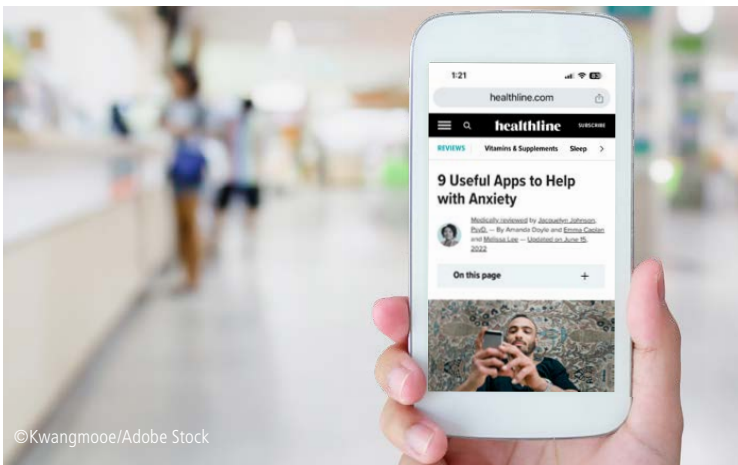


Identify the following:

-  **3 things you can see**
-  **3 things you can touch**
-  **3 things you can hear**

Be sure to make time in your day for things that calm you. This might be journaling, meditation, or deep breathing exercises. Taking even 5 minutes to sit quietly can have a significant positive effect on your mental health.

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Sources: Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Mayo Clinic



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Have You Tried a Mobile App?

There are several mobile applications (apps) you can use to help you with your anxiety. For example, an app called Calm helps you monitor your moods and set goals. It also includes audio programs that can help you relax. You can find a list of other apps at www.healthline.com/health/anxiety/top-iphone-android-apps. Most are free to download but certain features may cost extra.

If you haven't tried an app yet, you may want to check one out. Just remember that while technologies such as mobile apps can be helpful, they should be used to enhance your treatment plan, *not* replace it.



Resources

Learning more about anxiety or joining a support group can be helpful. The Anxiety & Depression Association of America has a list of self-help books on their website at <https://adaa.org/books>. You can check if these are available at your library. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has a list of support groups in Minnesota on their website at <https://namimn.org/support/nami-minnesota-support-groups>.



Note: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider's advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.

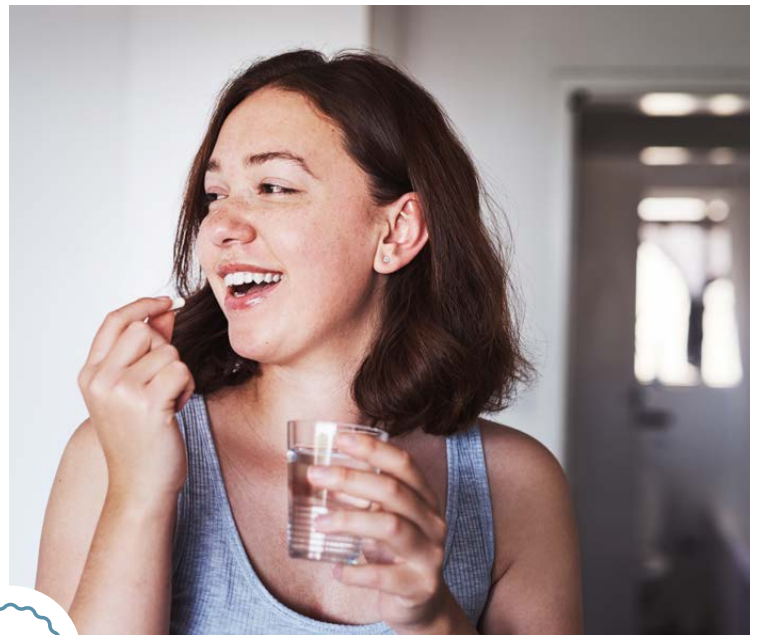
Medication: Stick with It

If you are prescribed medication, it is important that you take it exactly as it is prescribed. This can help you avoid setbacks in your treatment and get the best results.

If you are feeling better, you may think it's okay to stop taking your medication. However, it is important for you to keep taking it. The medication you take doesn't *cure* your condition, it relieves the symptoms. So, if you stop taking the medication, the symptoms will often return. You might also have withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking your medication.

If you *aren't* feeling better, keep in mind that these medications can take a couple weeks to work, so give it time. If it's still not working, talk to your health care provider.

To get the best results, stay on your medication as recommended by your health care provider. If you have questions or concerns, talk to your provider.



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1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711

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