



NHS

Cumbria, Northumberland,
Tyne and Wear
NHS Foundation Trust

Anxiety

Easy read information



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A member of staff or a carer can support you to read this booklet. They will be able to answer any questions that you have.

About this leaflet

- This leaflet is for people who have anxiety. This is being stressed, worried or nervous because something has happened.
- This leaflet will tell you how you might feel.
- It will tell you where you can go to get help.

What is anxiety?



Anxiety is the feeling we get when our body is dealing with a frightening or nasty experience.



It means that your body is getting ready to do something – this could be getting ready to fight danger or run away from it.

Lots of people get anxiety. It doesn't feel very nice, but it is not dangerous.

Some people get anxiety worse than others and it can become a problem when it starts to affect how you live your life.

How might I feel?



Anxiety will feel different for everyone. It can change the way you feel. The way you think, the things you do and the way your body works.



You might feel these things:

- Nervous, worried or scared.
- Stressed, on edge or tense.
- Dizzy, panicky or just 'strange'.



You might think differently:

- Worry more than usual.
- Not be able to concentrate.
- Think about the worst things that could happen.



You might do different things:

- Walk up and down a lot.
- Start something and not finish it.
- Can't relax or sit still.
- Be angry with people.
- Drink or smoke more.
- Eat more or less than normal.



Your body might feel different:

- Go numb or tingly.
- Feel breathless or that you can't breathe properly.
- Heart beats faster.
- Stomach pains.
- Aching muscles.
- If you feel some of these things, you might have anxiety.

What can I do to help?



Anxiety can get better. One of the first things to do is learn about why you have anxiety.



Think about the things that make you nervous or frightened. You could write a list or draw a picture. This might help you to see what is causing your anxiety and you can then think about what it would take to make things better.



Relaxing can be a good way to stop the feelings of anxiety. You could try some deep breathing exercises, or listening to your favourite music or watching your favourite TV programme.

You can have help to learn about relaxing to help your anxiety – ask your doctor or nurse.



Make sure you don't breathe too quickly as this can make you feel worse. Breathe slowly and deeply until the anxiety feelings start to go away.

Try to take your mind off things - go for a walk, do some exercise, or talk to a friend.

Changing the way you think

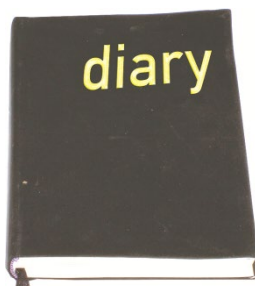


Some people find it hard to change the way they think when they are feeling nervous or worried. This can make the anxiety worse.

It is important to try and break the circle of thinking bad thoughts, which make your anxiety worse.



Try to think about the good things that have happened over the last week and concentrate on them. Remind yourself that nothing bad is going to happen.



You could keep a diary of the times you feel nervous or worried and then write or draw what you did to make yourself feel better.

What can I do to help?



If you think you are suffering from anxiety, you can talk to your doctor or nurse. They might give you some exercises to do, or they might give you some tablets to take.



Your doctor or nurse might ask you to see someone else who will be able to help you.

Where to get more help

If you would like to get more help or information, you can get in touch with these people:



Anxiety Care

Help and support for those suffering from anxiety.

www.anxietycare.org.uk



Rethink

Information and help for anyone who has mental health problems.

Advice Service: 0808 801 0525

Email: advice@rethink.org

www.rethink.org



You can also get help and information from your doctor or nurse.



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Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 246 7288

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