

# Health Facts: *Anxiety Disorders*



## Prevention Tips

People with anxiety disorders often are known as "worriers," concerned about control and perfectionism. These can be good traits to have. But when the need for perfectionism or control interferes with your life, you may have an anxiety disorder. The first step in prevention is to look at how you can respond differently to situations that make you anxious, modify the physiological response to those situations and master negative thinking.

A healthy lifestyle that includes regular aerobic exercise, relaxation techniques such as yoga, adequate rest and good nutrition can help reduce the impact of anxiety attacks.

To prevent your normal anxious feelings from going too far, try these suggestions:

- Identify situations that make you anxious, consider actions that will reduce the threat and try them out (for example, attend childbirth preparation classes to deal with the stress of labor and delivery; eliminate or reduce caffeine intake if nervousness alone is the problem).
- Avoid potentially dangerous ways of coping with anxiety, like smoking, alcohol, drug dependence or abnormal eating patterns.
- Express your feelings to someone you trust and can talk with comfortably. This often leads to a relief of anxious feelings.
- Try meditation or relaxation techniques such as yoga or stress reduction classes.
- Get regular physical activity like walking, jogging, swimming or any aerobic exercise.
- Avoid unnecessary stress by eliminating as many nonessential activities as possible from your daily routine.
- If your anxiety persists or becomes chronic, seek out a competent mental health professional. You can ask for help or a referral from your primary health care professional, a community mental health center, a mental health association or your local health department.

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