



## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a medical condition that is characterised by consistent and excessive worry.

Anxiety occurs when the ‘fight-or-flight’ response – our involuntary response to a threatening situation – goes askew.

Most of us will experience stressful periods during our lifetime and being worried or anxious during these times is normal. This is our body’s way of preparing us to deal with the situation. If you feel persistently or excessively anxious in a way that is out of keeping with the situation or events at hand you may need some assistance to manage this.

A diagnosis of anxiety disorder is usually given when it has a disabling impact on a person and interferes with their ability to carry out, or take pleasure in, day to day life.

Anxiety may be experienced as a one off event, or may be a regular occurrence that can be distressing and immobilising. Anxiety becomes a problem when it happens frequently, is very intense and overwhelming, and interferes with your daily living.



## A few facts about anxiety

Approximately 14% of people are affected by anxiety

Women are more prone to anxiety than men

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health issues

In addition to the impact on the individual, anxiety affects organisations and the community in a variety of ways. This may be through lost productivity, sick leave, medications, absenteeism, hospitalisation and disability payments.

## Signs and symptoms

A person with anxiety may experience physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate, rapid breathing, dry mouth, tense muscles, headache, increased sweating, upset stomach, feeling faint or shaky.

### Other symptoms may include:

- Finding it difficult to relax
- Excessive or unrealistic worries
- Irrational fear of everyday situations
- Experiencing panic attacks or extreme stress
- Excessive worry about social events
- Experiencing recurring thoughts that make you feel anxious
- Avoidance of challenging situations
- Poor sleep or difficulty getting to sleep
- Difficulty concentrating



## Help yourself

The following strategies will assist you to manage your anxiety. For some individuals, professional assistance and support may also be beneficial.

- 1 BE AWARE**
  - the more you understand about anxiety and how it impacts you, the better prepared you will be to deal with it.
- 2 RECOGNISE THE WARNING SIGNS**
  - monitor when you feel anxious (what were the triggers and sequence of events).
- 3 ACKNOWLEDGE EVENTS THAT CREATE ANXIETY FOR YOU**
  - and minimise these where practical.
- 4 USE RELAXATION STRATEGIES**
  - try slow breathing, listening to soothing music, visualisation, step outside for a walk, read a book or take some time to meditate.
- 5 DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF GOOD HEALTH**
  - regular exercise, a healthy diet and a good sleep routine will have a positive impact.
- 6 TAKE CARE OF STIMULANTS**
  - too much coffee or other caffeinated drinks may contribute to you feeling anxious.
- 7 BREAK TASKS INTO SMALLER PIECES**
  - sometimes breaking issues or problems into smaller steps can make it feel more manageable and reduce your anxiety.
- 8 ASK FOR HELP**
  - don't be afraid to reach out to a professional or someone you trust for assistance.

### NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you need assistance to understand or manage anxiety there is plenty of support available.

Your GP is a good starting point and at Benestar® we're always here to help.

Call Benestar  
or visit [Benestar.com](https://www.benestar.com)

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