

Treatment for anxiety



Key points to remember:

- There are many different treatment options for anxiety
- Psychological treatments are the most effective for most anxiety diagnosis.
- Making an appointment with your GP is the first step in seeking treatment.

Anxiety can often be both physically and emotionally exhausting. If you have anxiety, it's important to remember you are not alone. There are many health professional, services and online programs available to assist. Making an appointment with your general practitioner (GP), is a great first step.

Your GP, can do a thorough check of your symptoms, rule out any other medical condition and discuss treatment options with you.

The specific treatment will depend on a number of factors including what type of anxiety disorder you have and the severity.

What type of treatment is available?

In general there are three different types of treatment for anxiety:

- Psychological treatments
- Medical treatments (medication)
- Alternative therapies and self-help programs

1. Psychological Treatment

Research indicates that psychological therapy is one of the most effective ways to treat most types of anxiety.

There are many types of effective psychological treatments for anxiety, including:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Interpersonal Therapy (IPT)

- Exposure Therapy
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy
- Positive psychology
- Narrative therapy

Psychological treatments can be individual, group-based or online. The aim of psychological treatment is to help you change the way you think and to provide you with coping strategies so that you can better manage life's stressors and challenges. Psychological treatments can also help you to understand the reasons behind your anxiety and prevent a relapse.

2. Physical treatments

Whilst psychological treatments are the most effective way to manage your anxiety, if symptoms are severe some medications maybe helpful.

If medication is prescribed, it's important that you understand the risks and benefits, possible side effects and how regularly you will need to check back in with the doctor.

Some types of antidepressant medication can help people to manage anxiety, even if they are not experiencing symptoms of depression. When people have an anxiety condition, changes in the specific brain chemicals occurs. Antidepressant

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medication is designed to correct the imbalance of chemical messages. Anti-anxiety medications (e.g. benzodiazepines) are sometimes used for very severe anxiety. These medications can generally not recommended for long-term use due to the side effects, efficacy over time and addictive characteristics.

It's important to remember that not all anxiety needs medication. Many people respond well to lifestyle changes and psychological treatments.

3. Alternative Therapies

There are a number of alternative therapies or self-help strategies that can be helpful in managing your anxiety. These include:

- Exercise
- Balanced diet and reduced sugar
- Breathing and relaxation techniques
- Cutting down on caffeine
- Alcohol and drug avoidance
- Yoga or acupuncture

Depending on the severity of your anxiety, alternative treatments maybe used in conjunction with psychological or medical treatments.



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