

HealthMatters

AN EVERSIDE HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCE | APRIL 2021

Time to put your mental health first.



If feelings of anxiety and depression have started to interfere with your daily life, it may be time to seek help from a healthcare professional.

Anxiety & Depression

It's normal for everyone from time to time to feel anxious in a stressful situation or feel a bit down or sad, but overwhelming and ongoing feelings of anxiety and depression that interfere with daily activities may be a sign of an underlying mental health condition. Although mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression may be difficult to talk about, they are more common than you may think. Seeking help is a sign of great courage and strength. Anxiety and depression are highly treatable and many people experience significant relief with professional help.

Did you know? 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience mental illness each year.

- National Institute of Mental Health, 2017

What's the difference between anxiety & depression

Anxiety

Anxiety a lot of times is negative thinking focused on the future ("It won't work" or "I won't be good enough"). People with anxiety will typically experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Excessive worrying
- Overthinking
- Inability to relax
- Restlessness
- Trouble focusing
- Indecisiveness
- Obsessing over thoughts or situations

Depression

Depression is often negative thinking about the past ("I should have done that" or "That was the worst mistake I have ever made"). Depression can be characterized by:

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of interest
- Exhaustion
- Changes in appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Unexplained aches & pains

Typically, these symptoms would last longer than two weeks to be considered a depressive or anxiety disorder. It's important to remember that people with anxiety and depression experience different symptoms.

What can I do to improve my mental health? If you are working with a medical professional to manage anxiety and depression with therapy and medication, there are other things that you can do that may help lower your stress levels and improve your mood.

1. Get active

Exercise can have a positive effect on your stress and anxiety levels, and it can also improve your sleep. Exercise releases feel-good endorphins and other natural brain chemicals to improve your overall mood.

2. Spend time with people you trust

Work on creating and fostering positive relationships with your family and friends who can provide emotional support. Stay connected and remember that you are not alone.

3. Set goals and prioritize

If you have depression or anxiety, daily tasks can feel very overwhelming. Write down a reasonable daily to-do list and break large projects into smaller tasks. At the end of the day, focus on what you have accomplished rather than what you did not. Remind yourself it's ok to say "no" if you are feeling overwhelmed and have too much on your plate.

4. Avoid using drugs and alcohol

Alcohol and drugs can worsen anxiety. If you are addicted to drugs and alcohol, the idea of quitting can make you anxious. If you are having trouble quitting on your own, speak with your healthcare provider or find a support group to help you. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Helpline at **1-800-622-HELP (4357)**. This national helpline is a free and confidential treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and or substance abuse disorders.


Tip: If the idea of going to the gym sounds overwhelming, go for a 30-minute walk instead. Any movement is better than none.

The above information is not intended to diagnose or treat any mental illness and cannot take the place of seeing a medical professional. If you think that you are anxious or depressed, the best thing you can do is to seek help from a medical professional as soon as possible. Your provider will perform a physical exam and possibly lab tests to rule out any other conditions. They are also able to refer you to a mental health professional as needed.

Research shows that mental health conditions are not the result of one event but rather multiple causes. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible to mental health conditions. Genetic and biological factors also play a big part in whether someone develops mental health conditions. Just remember, a mental health condition is no one's fault.

If you or anyone you know is suffering from a mental health condition, seek help from a medical professional, such as your primary care provider.

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, call these numbers:

 **National suicide prevention lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

 **National alliance on mental illness helpline: 1-880-950-NAMI**

Want to learn more?

Make an appointment with your Everside provider to discuss your mental health and what you can do to today.

Call your health center to make an appointment.
eversidehealth.com