



Coping with Anxiety in Uncertain Times

Although it's normal to feel afraid and anxious during these uncertain times, there are ways to keep these feelings from taking over your life.

Most people experience anxiety as a fear of the unknown and an uncertainty about the future it often affects our behavior, thoughts, feelings and physical well being. Some symptoms of anxiety include:

- Insomnia
- Feeling keyed up, restless or easily fatigued
- Being highly irritable and short on patience
- Difficulty concentrating, losing train of thought
- Feelings of impending doom
- Headaches, muscle tension, or shortness of breath
- Accelerated heart rate, chest pains or discomfort
- Nausea, diarrhea, other abdominal distress

It's important that we take steps to help overcome our anxiety so it doesn't begin to impair our daily living.

- Educate yourself about the potential danger. Facts frequently are less frightening than a rumour and myth.
- If television or other news reports significantly increase feelings of anxiety and helplessness don't watch or read them; you don't need to know every last detail.
- Find ways to distract yourself from thinking potential for harm. Get involved in an activity that you can control; work in the garden, clean the basement, do volunteer work, etc.
- Take advantage of the weekends to refuel. A day or so away from normal routine – whether spent at home or on a weekend getaway – breaks the cycle of preoccupation with disaster.
- Talk about your anxiety with family and friends; avoid being alone.
- When you find yourself worrying about the unknown, mentally change the subject.
- Avoid or at least minimize alcohol and caffeine intake; caffeine can add to “the jitters,” and both disrupt sleep.
- Get regular exercise.



- If you smoke, don't increase your tobacco consumption. While it may seem to ease anxiety in the short run, increase smoking poses significant long-term health hazards.

Coping Strategies

Exercise – Exercising can relieve nervous energy and help you sleep better. (Always consults your doctor before starting an exercise routine.)

Relax – Relaxation Techniques can help you reduce stress and focus on the “here and now”. Try listening to some soft music in a comfortable chair, or concentrating on controlling your breathing in a quiet place.

Talk – Spend time with friends and family voicing opinions and expressing your feelings. Ask others how they are coping with their fears.