



Indicates specific advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Indicates specific advice for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

What is it? (signs and symptoms)

People with anxiety often feel excessive, irrational worry about events and activities that are difficult to control. There are different types of anxiety, and the most common form is called Generalised Anxiety Disorder.

A small amount of anxiety is a normal response to a threat or stressful situation, but anxiety can become a problem if it affects your ability to function day to day. As well as worry and stress, anxiety can cause physical symptoms like fatigue, stomach pain, muscle tension and restlessness.

Anxiety can impact your quality of life in many ways, but it is a treatable condition. Many people with anxiety are able to reduce or manage their symptoms with the treatment and support.

How can my GP help me? (treatment and management)

It is important to see a GP you are comfortable with and who you trust. Your GP will discuss strategies and treatment options for your anxiety with you. Your GP may also:

- Refer you to a mental health professional such as a psychologist
- Order tests to check your general health
- Grade the severity of your anxiety
- Give you resources and support for anxiety
- Develop a mental health plan with you
- Help you develop a crisis or safety plan

You may need time to decide on a treatment. Common treatments include:

- Psychology
- Education and lifestyle measures
- Practical and emotional support
- Problem solving and calming techniques
- Medications

When should I call an ambulance?

If you are concerned that you or someone else is in immediate danger, or if there is immediate risk to your safety, dial Triple Zero (000) immediately.



Some questions you might like to ask your GP or other mental health professionals:

- What's the most likely cause of my anxiety?
- What could be making my anxiety worse?
- Do I need any tests?
- Should I see a specialist?
- What types of treatments could help me?
- What lifestyle changes can I make?
- Where can I read more about how to manage my anxiety?

How can my GP help me in future?

Your GP will continue to see you for regular appointments to monitor your treatment and symptoms. If your symptoms aren't improving after some time, you may need to try a different treatment. Medication is usually offered after counselling and other treatments haven't helped. You can also ask your GP for a referral to a psychologist or other mental health professional.

What can I do?

Continue to see your GP regularly. Follow your agreed treatment plan.

Alcohol and other drugs can make you feel worse. Talk to your GP about support available to reduce or quit.

Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, taking time to relax, and maintaining good sleep habits can also help. If you smoke, talk to your GP about support to reduce or quit.

Take time to do activities you value. Connect with people you have positive relationships with.

What supports are available?

Emergency support

If you are concerned that you or someone else is in immediate danger, dial **Triple Zero (000)** urgently.

Treatment support

Find local services in your area:

- Armidale, Tamworth, New England, North West
- Central Coast
- Lower Hunter, Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog
- Manning, Great Lakes, Taree
- Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens
- Upper Hunter

Crisis support

There are many telephone, online counselling and crisis services available.

These services allow you to access immediate support, at any time of day or night, without having to wait for an appointment or when it's difficult to access your regular healthcare provider.

- **Lifeline:** phone **13 11 14** or visit lifeline.org.au for online crisis support chat
- **Kids Helpline:** for children and young people aged 5 to 25 – phone **1800 55 1800** or visit kidshelpline.com.au for webchat or email support
- **Mental Health line:** phone **1800 011511**
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** phone **1300 659 267** or visit suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Further reading

- **Beyond Blue** – What works for anxiety resources.beyondblue.org.au
- **Beyond Blue** – Staying Well: a guide to recovering from anxiety and depression resources.beyondblue.org.au
- **Mental Health in Multicultural Australia** – What is an anxiety disorder? mhima.org.au 
- **Sleep Health Foundation** – Good sleep habits sleephealthfoundation.org.au
- **Beyond Blue** – Who does it affect?  beyondblue.org.au
- **Beyond Blue** – Who does it affect?  beyondblue.org.au
- **Proppa Deadly** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People tell their stories  bimaprojects.org.au
- **Head to Health** – Anxiety headtohealth.gov.au
- **Mental Health Carers NSW** www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org