

Anxiety

Just the Facts

It is very common for a person to feel anxious when facing a new or stressful situation. We all feel worried at times in our day-to-day lives. People may experience anxiety as nervousness, tension, panic, fear or feeling like something bad is going to happen. Anxiety can also be experienced as physical symptoms such as upset stomach, sweaty palms, fast heartbeat, shaking or flushed face.

Although it is normal to feel anxious when facing a life-threatening illness and the intensive treatment there are things that may help decrease the feelings of anxiety. The goal is to reduce anxiety, not eliminate all anxiety.

Your Goals:

- ✓ Learn how to cope with anxiety.
- ✓ Get professional help when needed.

Important Signs and Symptoms:

Report symptoms to doctor or nurse during clinic hours today.

- Feelings of dread and apprehension for several days.
- Physical symptoms such as sweaty palms, shaking, rapid heartbeat, and so on. Keep in mind that these symptoms can also be caused by side effects of treatment.
- Wide mood swings that you cannot control.

What You Can Do At Home:

Learn how to cope with anxiety.

- ➔ Recognize that anxiety during treatment is normal and so is getting help for it.
- ➔ Try to understand what thoughts are triggering the anxiety. For example, if you are anxious about a medical procedure, ask yourself what it is about the procedure that is upsetting. Then ask yourself how you would change the procedure so it doesn't

make you so anxious. Staff may be able to help make those changes so talk with them about it.

- ➡ Getting the facts can help. For example, if you are worried about pain or discomfort, you can get information on how to manage pain or discomfort.
- ➡ Thinking about doing things that are pleasant and relaxing can help reduce anxiety. Relaxation is a skill that can be used to counteract anxiety. It's nearly impossible to be relaxed and anxious at the same time.

Get professional help when needed.

If anxiety doesn't improve despite your efforts to reduce it, discuss it with your nurse, doctor or social worker.