

How to Help Your Teen Control Anxiety

Is Your Teen Feeling Anxious?

Facing play tryouts, a basketball game or a math test could cause your teen to feel anxious. Everyone feels anxious at some time.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a response to everyday stress. There are different levels of anxiety. Sometimes, it becomes an unpleasant, strong feeling of fear or dread. People who feel anxious may feel they are out of control with what is happening in their lives.

What Anxiety Can Do

Anxiety has many symptoms. Some are emotional and some are physical. Anxiety comes from the release of chemicals, such as adrenalin, which cause the “fight or flight” response.

Your teen may have a few or many symptoms. Common symptoms are:

- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- having a racing or pounding heartbeat
- breathing problems (too rapid, short of breath or unable to breathe)
- feeling like you will throw up
- shaking or having shaking in your hands
- having tense muscles in your face, neck, back or other areas
- worrying a lot
- feeling restless or irritable
- having trouble concentrating
- having problems sleeping due to worrying
- avoiding situations that make you uncomfortable.

Help Your Teen Control Anxiety

Here are some tips that can help your teen control anxiety.

- **Learn and practice deep breathing.** This will help your teen calm his or her central nervous system and help his or her heart rate and breathing be more steady
- **Maintain good health habits.** Make sure your teen is eating well-balanced meals and avoiding caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.
- **Get plenty of rest.** Your teen’s body and mind need to “re-energize” each night. Most teens do not get enough sleep.
- **Get some kind of physical activity every day.** Go for a bike ride, walk or play catch at the park. Spend some time outdoors.
- **Do something that makes you happy.** Encourage your teen to do something that makes him or her happy. This could be listening to music or watching a movie.
- **Talk about stress.** Help your teen find out what causes him or her stress and try to reduce it.

When to Get Help

If anxiety keeps your teen from feeling healthy and affects his or her school, home or social life, please talk with your health care provider. Severe and chronic (long-lasting) anxiety needs treatment.

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For additional tips and resources to help manage anxiety, visit [changetochill.org](https://www.changetochill.org).