

*Anxiety can have a lot of names — nervousness, worry, uneasiness, or fear. Most people dealing with cancer feel some kind of anxiety.*

## What is Anxiety?

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Anxiety is a feeling of worry, care or concern. It can range from mild to strong.

Sometimes, people feel anxious when they deal with stress or uncertainty. Fear of the unknown can cause anxiety—for example, not knowing what to expect or a feeling that something bad is going to happen. Knowing what to expect can also be a source of anxiety.

## What are the signs of anxiety?

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Some signs of anxiety are:

- Worrying
- Feeling cranky
- Feeling restless
- Difficulty focusing
- Muscle tension
- A fast heartbeat
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Nausea
- Feeling numb, dizzy, or out of breath
- Sleep problems
- Fear of cancer returning

Anxious feelings might feel stronger or weaker at different times. They may also change as you deal with different things. Anxiety can affect your daily life. Get help if your anxiety:

- Lasts for a long while
- Is very strong
- Makes it hard to get through each day

Talk to your doctor or nurse if anxiety is a problem for you or a family member. You can also ask for a referral to a counsellor.

## What can I do about it?

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Coping is anything that a person does to feel better. Learning about anxiety and looking at why you feel anxious can help you cope. So can these tips:

- **Do things that you like and find relaxing.** This might be something like reading, writing, going for a walk, or playing an instrument.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat a healthy diet. Get enough sleep.
- **Express your feelings.** Try writing down how you feel. Maybe have a good cry, throw a pillow, or turn on loud music and scream.
- **Laugh.** A funny movie, book or TV show might help.
- **Pay attention to what triggers your anxiety.** Once you know your triggers, you can try to plan ahead.
- **Let it out.** Try talking about things with someone you trust or in a support group.
- **Think about talking to a professional counsellor.** He or she can help you to understand your anxiety. They can also help you find ways to cope.

### For more information, call:

- Halifax: 902-473-6067 (Nova Scotia Cancer Centre)
- Sydney: 902-567-7771 (Cape Breton Cancer Centre)
- Yarmouth: 902-742-3542 ext.381
- All other areas: 1-866-524-1234 (Cancer Patient Navigators)

You may also be interested in national online support groups:

<http://canada.thewellnesscommunity.org/>

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