

National Health Observances

February

American Heart Month
Relationship Wellness Month
National Children's Dental Health Month

March

American Red Cross Month
National Nutrition Month
Save Your Vision Month
Trisomy Awareness Month

Week of March 7 - 13

National Sleep Awareness Week
National School Breakfast Week

Week of March 13 - 15

National Money Week

Week of March 14 - 20

Brain Awareness Week

April

Alcohol Awareness Month
National Autism Awareness Month



What is EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** service that can assist you and your eligible family members with **ANY** personal concern, large or small.

Don't Let Anxiety Control Your Life

Anxiety is familiar to everyone due to the many stresses and complexities of modern life. But about 25 percent of U.S. adults have a serious problem with anxiety at some time in their lives.

"Unlike fear, which is usually directed toward a concrete thing or event, such as a snarling dog or not meeting a deadline, anxiety is often nonspecific and can be brought on by worrying about the future, your finances or your health, in general," says Edmund Bourne, Ph.D., author of *Coping With Anxiety*. "Anxiety can appear in different forms and at different levels of intensity, and can range in severity from a mere twinge of uneasiness to a full-blown panic attack."

The causes of anxiety are varied and include upsets in brain chemistry, heredity, childhood trauma, abuse, chronic stress, loss of a loved one and drug and alcohol abuse, to name a few.

"While it can be helpful to identify possible causes of anxiety and address them, you don't need to know why you feel anxious to be helped by practicing coping strategies," says Dr. Bourne.

Coping Strategies

The following practices are helpful for anyone with anxiety and may be all that's needed if your anxiety level is mild and not disrupting your life.

People with more severe anxiety, including anyone dealing with panic or post-traumatic stress disorder, will still find the exercises helpful but also may need therapy and medication.

These exercises can be done singly or in any combination:

Take Calming Breaths

This exercise quickly interrupts the momentum of anxiety symptoms. Breathing from your abdomen, inhale through your nose slowly to a count of five. Pause and hold your breath to a count of five. Exhale slowly to a count of five. Take two normal breaths, then repeat the cycle for three to five minutes.

Stop Magnifying Problems

Exaggerating problems by making them seem bigger and more serious than they are can lead to anxiety. To combat this way of thinking, stop using words such as terrible, awful or horrendous in relation to events or situations in your life. Instead of saying to yourself, "It's unbearable," or "I can't stand it," try saying, "I can cope" and "I can deal with and survive this."



Stop Worrisome Thoughts

Use this strategy if you find yourself stuck in a spiral of worrisome thoughts that won't go away. "If you're alone and want to halt a chain of anxious thoughts, shout in a loud and forceful manner, 'Stop!' or 'Stop it!'" says Dr. Bourne. "If you're with other people, shout internally as you visualize a large stop sign." Every time the worrisome thoughts return, repeat the spoken or internal command to yourself.

Shift Your Point of View

When anxiety or worry about an actual or possible problem is getting the best of you, try thinking about the situation in the following ways:

- Tell yourself you can lighten up about it.
- Affirm “this too shall pass.”
- Realize it’s not likely to be as bad as your worst thoughts about it.

Combat Negative Self-Talk

Positive affirmations can help you cope with anxiety in the moment and over the long-term by helping you change long-standing beliefs, which tend to enable anxiety. To make your thoughts more constructive and supportive, replace or refute each negative statement illustrated below in italics with the one that follows it.

For example, replace “This is unbearable” with “I can learn to cope with this.” Or, replace “What if this goes on without stopping?” with “I’ll deal with this one day at a time.”

“Resisting or fighting anxiety is likely to make it worse,” says Dr. Bourne. “A more constructive approach is to cultivate an attitude that says, ‘OK, here it is again. I can handle this. I’ve done it before.’ In most cases, anxiety peaks and begins to subside in a few minutes. It will pass more quickly if you practice coping strategies regularly when you start to feel anxious.” Krames Staywell



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5 Fun Fruits You Should Try

Fruit is one of nature’s perfect foods. It’s packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber, without fat. Even though they are filling, most are naturally low in calories. And it’s delicious. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the American Cancer Society, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Cancer Institute recommend that 5 to 9 servings of fruits (and vegetables) be consumed every day depending on a person’s energy intake, to maintain good health and reduce the risk of cancer.

So go bite into an apple, a banana, or a ... carambola fruit. Haven’t heard of that one? Don’t worry. As Americans are adopting healthier diets and becoming more adventurous, exotic fruits like the carambola are showing up in markets.



Here’s a guide to five you should try.

Carambola (Star Fruit)

This is a fruit that’s a winner in all categories. It tastes great, and it’s attractive, as well. Nutritionally, it’s low in calories and has 27 mg vitamin C, beta-carotene and potassium. It can be substituted for fresh lemon and lime slices, or eaten fresh.

Guava

Even if you’ve never had a guava, you may be familiar with its taste. Guavas give a tropical flavor to fruit drinks. Low in calories, high in vitamin C and potassium, they can be eaten plain. They’ve also widely used in jellies, jams and sherbets.

Kiwi

The kiwi, like its namesake bird, is small and cute. It’s high in pectin, a key fiber. Eat them plain, or cave them into a succulent garnish.

Papaya

This is one of the best sources of beta-carotene. You’ll also find lots of vitamin C, potassium and some calcium, and a taste that many people say is addictive. Naturally low in calories, just cut it in half, scoop out the seeds and dig in.

Mango

So lush and tropical that they’re almost decadent, mangos are actually one of the healthiest food you’ll ever eat. They are high in vitamin A and potassium, and even have vitamin C. Each mango gives you about a tenth of your daily fiber requirement. Peel and eat, but not while you’re wearing a suit; mangos are messy.

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