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*Live. Life. Well.*

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## Calming Strategies to Manage Anxiety

Nearly 20% of adults in the U.S. experience anxiety, with most developing symptoms before the age of 20.<sup>1</sup> The exact cause of anxiety is unknown, but experts believe there are both genetic and environmental components.

People experience anxiety differently, but the common thread is a persistent, excessive fear or panic in everyday situations. Challenging life circumstances often precede anxiety. Changing jobs, dealing with a health problem, moving, and being a caregiver are all common triggers. Symptoms of anxiety can range from feelings of restlessness to intense physical symptoms like nausea, sweating, and shortness of breath.<sup>1</sup>

Learning how to manage anxiety can help reduce the intensity and frequency of your symptoms. Try these calming strategies the next time you feel anxious:<sup>2,3</sup>

- **Phone a friend.** Connect with a trusted friend or mentor who is a good listener. Sometimes venting your feelings and emotions is all you need to release intense emotions.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol intensifies emotional responses and interrupts sleep quality, which can make anxiety worse.
- **Avoid caffeine.** For some people, caffeine amplifies physical symptoms of anxiety, leading to increased heart rate and shortness of breath.<sup>2</sup>
- **Prioritize restful sleep.** Since physical and mental exhaustion can worsen anxiety symptoms, try to get at least 7 hours of restful sleep each night.



- **Try deep breathing exercises.** Use deep breathing techniques, such as belly breathing, as soon as anxiety symptoms appear. Deep breathing lowers your heart rate and blood pressure, which can help you feel calmer and more relaxed.
- **Keep a journal.** Record details about your anxiety symptoms in a journal, and note the people, situations, or other factors that may have played a role. These clues can help you and your healthcare team predict when anxiety might occur in the future.

Equipped with the right self-care tools, you can learn to manage anxiety when symptoms first appear. If your attempts to self-manage are not effective, contact your healthcare provider or a mental health professional to discuss other treatment options.

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Anxiety Disorders. Accessed Sept 11, 2023.

2. Mayo Clinic Health System. 11 tips for coping with an anxiety disorder. Published July 20, 2021. Accessed Sept 11, 2023.

3. Better Help. 10 Coping Strategies For Anxiety. Published July 23, 2023. Accessed Sept 12, 2023.



## How to Talk with Your Doctor About Mental Health

It is normal to feel disappointed, sad, frustrated, or angry when life does not happen the way you hoped it would. In fact, negative emotions are as natural as positive ones. However, when negative feelings linger for long stretches of time, or disrupt your relationships, it may indicate something more is going on.

Healthcare providers are trained to identify signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression. If you have concerns about your mental health, a good next step is to schedule an appointment with your provider and start a conversation.

Here are some possible ways to bring up mental health concerns with your doctor:<sup>3</sup>

- I think I may be depressed. Do you have suggestions on how to handle that?
- Is there a mental health or depression screening I can take?
- What resources can help me understand what I am experiencing?
- Who is best suited to diagnose my condition?
- What are my treatment options?
- I have had thoughts about harming myself. What should I do?

Share specific examples of the symptoms you are experiencing and how often they occur. Describe how those symptoms are affecting your professional work, personal relationships, and day-to-day routines. Provide details about how you have already attempted to manage your symptoms, including prescription or over-the-counter medications.

Your provider may suggest lifestyle changes, self-care strategies, or medication. They may also refer you to someone who specializes in diagnosing and treating mental health conditions, such as a psychiatrist or mental health therapist.<sup>2</sup>

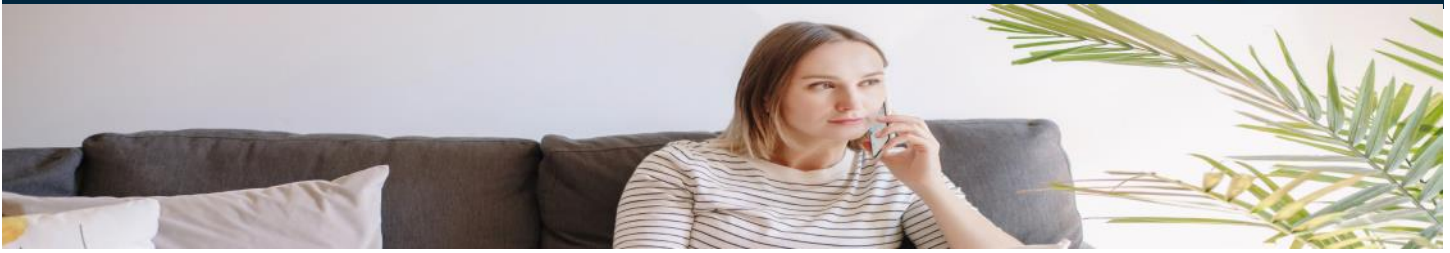
Talking with your healthcare provider about your mental wellbeing is just like talking about any other health concern. Be honest about how you are feeling and ask about alternative treatment options if you are uncomfortable with the initial recommendations.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, if your treatment plan does not seem to be working for you, be sure to circle back with your provider and ask about alternative options.



1. National Institute of Mental Health. Tips for [Talking With a Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health](#). Accessed Sept 12, 2023.

2. Cleveland Clinic. [What is a Psychiatrist? What They Do & When To See One](#). Last reviewed April 10, 2022. Accessed Sept 12, 2023.

3. Familydoctor.org. [Talking to Your Doctor About Your Mental Health](#). Accessed Sept 19, 2023.



## When You Are Not Okay

It is rare to feel good all the time. Most people experience periods of highs and lows throughout their lives. Knowing how to recognize when you are not okay can help protect your mental health.

Here are some signs that you might not be okay.<sup>2,3</sup>

- You feel like nothing matters
- You are isolating yourself from people and social interactions
- You are using more alcohol or drugs than usual
- You experience severe mood swings that affect your relationships
- You have had thoughts of harming yourself or others

If any of these ring true for you, here are some things you can do right now:

### Release

Connect with a trusted friend and share what you are feeling. Be open and honest, ask for what you need, and be clear about what is not helpful in terms of support. Talking through your emotions can help defuse them.

### Rest

Not getting enough restful sleep can make stressful situations worse. Sleep helps your body recover from the demands of daily life. If you are struggling to get good sleep, ask your doctor for guidance on self-care or sleep aid options.

### Write

Some people prefer to journal privately about emotional experiences. Poetry, freestyle writing, or journal prompts are all effective ways to express and sort through uncomfortable or confusing emotions.

### Reprioritize

When life feels heavy, you may need to reprioritize your time based on your energy levels. Maybe the dishes can wait. Focusing on what is most important right now can help reduce feelings of overwhelm.

### Take Action

If you are not okay, it is important to take swift action. If self-care has not helped, call your doctor or therapist, and schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns and symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

If you need help immediately, call 911 or go directly to your closest emergency room. You can also call or text 988 or visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) to talk with a crisis counselor.



1. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). [Finding a Mental Health Professional](#). Accessed Sept. 13, 2023.

2. Mayo Clinic. Mental health: [What is normal, what is not](#). Accessed Sept. 12, 2023.

3. American Psychiatric Association. [Warning Signs of Mental Illness](#). Accessed Sept. 19, 2023.



# See what makes a healthy portion

A portion is how much you choose to eat at one time. It could be the single serving amount from the package – or it could be more.

Here are some guidelines to help you measure your portions in any setting:



## 6 WAYS

to create right-sized portions\*



### 1. Raw or cooked veggies, whole fruit or 100% fruit juice

A baseball or an average-sized fist — **about 1 cup**



### 2. Grains, such as pasta, rice and oatmeal (1-ounce equivalent)

A tennis ball or small, scooped handful — **about ½ cup**



### 3. Fish, chicken, beef and other meats

A deck of cards or the palm of your hand — **about 3 ounces**



### 4. Peanut butter or other nut spreads

The size of your thumb — **about 1 tablespoon**



### 5. Oils, like salad dressing, and other fats

A postage stamp or the tip of the pointer finger — **about 1 teaspoon**



### DID YOU KNOW?

Restaurant portions have grown over the years.

Try splitting your order with someone to keep amounts in check when eating out.

\*Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Ellis E., Serving Size vs. Portion Size: Is There A Difference? Available at: <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/nutrition-panels-and-food-labels/serving-size-vs-portion-size-is-there-a-difference>. Accessed November 9, 2022.

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## Creamy Tuscan Chicken

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
- Lemon wedges, for serving

### Instructions

#### Step 1

In a skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add chicken and season with salt, pepper, and oregano. Cook until golden and no longer pink, 8 minutes per side. Remove from skillet and set aside.

#### Step 2

In the same skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add cherry tomatoes and season with salt and pepper. Cook until tomatoes are beginning to burst then add spinach and cook until spinach is beginning to wilt.

#### Step 3

Stir in heavy cream and parmesan and bring mixture to a simmer. Reduce heat to low and simmer until sauce is slightly reduced, about 3 minutes. Return chicken to skillet and cook until heated through, 5 to 7 minutes.

#### Step 4

Serve with lemon wedges.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Serving Size
5 minutes	35 minutes	4



### Nutrition Facts

Calories	330
Total Fat	21g
Sodium	270mg
Carbohydrate	5g
Dietary Fiber	1.5g
Protein	31g



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