

## **What is anxiety?**

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as a worry or fear. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. It's normal to feel anxious about something like a medical test, an exam or job interview. A little bit of anxiety can be helpful, for example, feeling anxious before an exam might make you more alert and improve your performance. But too much anxiety could make you tired and unable to concentrate.

## **Symptoms of anxiety**

Anxiety can cause both psychological and physical symptoms.

Psychological symptoms can include:

- Feeling worried or uneasy a lot of the time
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Not being able to concentrate
- Feeling on edge or not being able to relax
- Being irritable or quick to get angry
- Being extra alert
- Feeling tearful
- Needing frequent reassurance from other people

When you're feeling anxious your body releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These cause the physical symptoms of anxiety such as an increased heart rate and sweating. Other physical symptoms can include:

- A pounding heartbeat
- Breathing faster
- Palpitations (an irregular heartbeat)
- Feeling sick
- Chest pains
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling faint
- Needing the toilet more frequently
- "Butterflies" in your tummy

## Coping with Anxiety

Some people may find some of the following suggestions useful:

- Take part in regular physical activity
- Eat regularly and try to maintain a healthy diet
- Avoid relying on alcohol, drugs or cigarettes to help you cope
- Practising relaxation techniques or meditation
- Take part in activities such as Yoga or Tai Chi
- Maintain routines such as going to bed and getting up at the same times
- Talk to friends and family for support
- Talk to your GP

Talking through your problems with a counsellor may help you to deal better with your anxiety.

If you feel you may benefit from counselling or would like to know more please contact us on **01224 633131**