

Managing Your Anxiety About Health Risks

Most people experience a heightened level of concern when new varieties of health risks have been brought to their attention. For many people, the cumulative effect of these unclear threats of danger create a chronic, heightened sense of worry and stress. This is known as “anticipatory anxiety,” which is an emotional state of what-will-happen-next fears. It is usually caused by the perception of possible negative outcomes or personal catastrophes.

While fear is a normal reaction for all people who anticipate risks to their health or the health of a loved one, the ability to manage this uncertainty can differ from person to person. An individual’s reaction to these situations is influenced most greatly by how one is “wired” to experience anxiety. It can also be swayed by the number of other stress-causing issues currently being faced. Health scares tend to create increased anxiety the closer they come to one’s self, family, work place, or community. If you have experienced similar situations which resulted in negative outcomes, the level of anticipatory anxiety can escalate quickly.

Common Anticipatory Anxiety Reactions

Feelings: anxiety, fear, anger, confusion, hopelessness, loss of control, numbness, sadness, moodiness, irritability, guilt

Behaviors: withdrawing from others or activities, disrupted routines, startle reactions, easily crying

Cognitions: preoccupation with possibility of catastrophes, concentration difficulties, self-doubt, worry, indecisiveness, memory difficulties

Physical Complaints: muscle tension, headaches, gastric distress, sleep and appetite changes, fatigue

Managing Anticipatory Anxiety

Be Informed

Gather the information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source on health or medical issues such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (<http://cdc.gov>). Talk to your private healthcare providers about your fears.

Realistic Self-Talk

While we can’t always control what happens to us, we can always control what we say to ourselves. It’s important to keep things in perspective. Talk to yourself in reasonable ways. Ask yourself “how likely is my fear?”

Create a Plan

Think about how you will cope if the situation you anticipate becomes real. What can you do now to work through some of the scenarios in advance? Working through these possibilities can lessen your anxiety.

Seek Additional Assistance

There are many helpful treatment approaches that can lead to a reduction in the experience of anxiety reactions while also encouraging increased tolerance for managing uncertainty. The approaches may include a focus on healthy lifestyles that include rest, nutrition and exercise, counseling using cognitive-behavioral therapy, and the practice of mindfulness. In some situations, medication under the guidance of a doctor can also be helpful.

For additional assistance with anticipatory anxiety related to health concerns, contact Carebridge at 800-437-0911.

© Copyright 2020 Carebridge Corporation All rights reserved.

Contact Carebridge at **800.437.0911** or visit **www.myliferesource.com** for more information!

