

Tips

Psycho-oncology support

It may be that the psychological stress of the disease cannot be managed without specialist help. Psycho-oncologists can give you and your family additional support in processing the disease through counselling sessions.

Cognitive behavioural therapy can help you adjust thoughts or behaviours to reduce your anxiety. Ask your treatment team for a recommendation.

Further information on this topic

- **«Worrying about cancer coming back»** (MacMillan Cancer Support, 2023) – Guide for anyone who is worried about cancer coming back after treatment
- **«Distress During Cancer Care»** (NCCN Guidelines for Patients, 2024) – Guide explaining emotional distress during cancer and ways to cope
- **«Talking with Children About Cancer»** (University Hospitals, Seidman Cancer Center, 2022) – FAQs and developmental guidance for parents and carers.
- **«Caregiving for Your Loved One With Cancer»** (CancerCare, 2019) – Easy-to-read tips for family caregivers on supporting the person with cancer

Anxiety

Good to know

Anxiety is a normal reaction to a difficult and threatening situation. Anxiety can cause physical and mental symptoms.

Changes in your life situation can trigger anxiety.

In cancer, anxiety can arise, for example

- when the diagnosis is made,
- at the start of the treatment,
- when the treatment is changed,
- when you are adjusting to your new life situation or
- if your health deteriorates.




Anxiety often occurs rather unexpectedly, for example at the end of the treatment or when you return to normal daily living.

If you feel anxious, and especially if this has been going on for more than six months, it is important that you see a professional to relieve your anxiety.

It is also important to see a professional if you experience a loss of interest and motivation, a feeling of worthlessness, severe sleep disturbances or suicidal thoughts.



Anxiety

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do for yourself...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mild anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try not to get through difficult times alone. It will be easier for you to cope if you can share such times with people you are close to. Don't be afraid to ask the treatment team questions. Prepare for the next contact and note down all questions that you would like to ask. Discuss upcoming decisions with those closest to you as well. Make sure you get regular exercise. Physical activity can increase inner harmony. Coffee can make anxiety worse. Try to reduce or stop your coffee consumption.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inner restlessness, palpitations Dizziness, sweating, tremor You are able to carry out daily tasks only to a limited extent You have difficulty sleeping You feel that you are losing control of your situation You feel that you're "not yourself anymore" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve unanswered questions about your treatment and illness with the treatment team. Try to distract yourself with something you enjoy if you have recurring negative thoughts. Relaxation exercises using yoga or muscle relaxation can calm you. Massages (possibly prescribed by the doctor) and listening to music can also help you relax. Don't hesitate to discuss your worries with doctors, nursing staff or psycho-oncologists or in self-help groups. Find out in advance who you can contact in emergencies.
	<p>Sudden onset of physical symptoms such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest pain Difficulty breathing Dizziness when you have not exerted yourself <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant loss of interest and motivation, a feeling of worthlessness, severe sleep disturbances or suicidal thoughts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the treatment team.