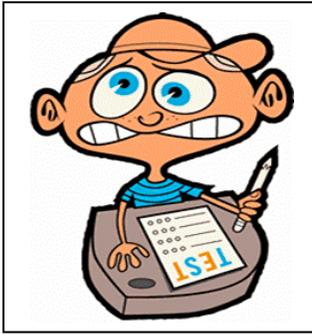


Test Anxiety - Information for Parents

What is Test Anxiety?

Test Anxiety is a psychological condition in which people experience extreme distress and anxiety before, during and/or after a test. Test anxiety is very common and can interfere with studying. Test anxiety may block performance and make it difficult to recall information that you know.



In order to perform well in a stressful situation like during a test, you must be physically and psychologically alert. The level of alertness is also called arousal.

Increased arousal can help improve performance, but only up to a certain point. At the point when arousal becomes excessive, performance diminishes.

The causes of test anxiety are different for everyone, but common causes include: fear of disappointing parents, family or friends, fear of not reaching academic goals, connecting test results with how you feel about yourself, and in general having a predisposition for anxiety.

Learn to identify what triggers your test anxiety and find strategies that work best for you.

Signs and Symptoms of Test Anxiety

Some examples include: Blanking out, racing thoughts, difficulty concentrating, negative thoughts, not being able to recall information during test but able to recall it after, nausea, faintness, sweating and headache.



Anxiety in General

In healthy amounts, anxiety can be a motivational tool that helps people do their best and learn new skills. If anxiety lasts too long or is too intense, it may begin to interfere with a person's life.

How Parents can help?

- **Praise hard work – not smart work!** Reward or praise your child's efforts. Have realistic expectations about how your child will do, and encourage their best.
- **Get involved.** Get to know your child's teachers and attend parent-teacher conferences. Mark down test days on your home calendar. Help your child stay organized in a study schedule.
- **Keep a positive attitude** about tests, even if you are feeling anxious about how your child might do on a test. Promote positive talk. Talk with your child about the test and ask how they are feeling about it ... talking about it may help to decrease some of the worries they have. Assure your child that test marks do not determine a person's worth.

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What Strategies can Help a Student?

- **Positive Self Talk:** Acknowledge that you have done your best to prepare for the test and that you will do your best on the test. Stay in control of negative thoughts; when you are aware of these thoughts respond with positive self-talk. Talk to yourself the way that you would to a good friend; be kind, supportive, patient, and encouraging.
- **Keep Calm:** Practice deep breathing as a technique for calming anxiety before and during a test. Stay grounded by trying mindfulness exercises if negative thoughts start to take over.
- **Sleep:** Make sure you are well rested for the day ahead. Staying up late won't be worth the stress compared to the amount you learn.
- **Exercise** to reduce anxiety for the days leading up to the test can help decrease stress.
- **Eat a healthy breakfast:** Fuel your brain and avoid drinking excessive amounts of caffeine. Caffeine can make you feel jittery and more anxious.
- **Get prepared:** Studying and being well prepared is the best strategy. Study in smaller chunks, not long stretches. Create a weekly study schedule with goals for each session. Use flash cards. Practice by explaining or teaching the materials to others. If practice tests are available, take as many as you can so that you become accustomed to doing the tests. Create a study space with limited distractions.
- **Get organized.** Check out the time and location of the test well in advance.
- **Be prepared:** Bring all your supplies! Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, calculator with enough batteries and any other resources that your instructor allows you to. Bring a watch to the test with you so that you can better pace yourself.
- **Don't cram!!!** Try to do something fun or relaxing the night before a big test.
- **Ask for help:** Read the instructions and go over the exam. Write down formulas or key facts that you might need. Do the simpler questions first and skip questions (if needed) to return to later. If you don't understand the question ask for help from your teacher.
- **Don't rush:** Take your time and pace yourself. Give yourself some time to review at the end. Use all the time you need.
- **Avoid others:** Don't worry if others finish before you. Avoid talking to other students before or after about the test. Keep your thoughts positive!
- **Reward yourself after the test!** Remind yourself that whatever the result of the test, tests do not reflect your self-worth.

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Resources for Test Anxiety

Anxiety BC www.anxietybc.com

How to Study: www.howtostudy.org

Kids health study tips: www.kidshealth.org

MindShift app designed by anxietybc.com

Teen Mental Health www.teenmentalhealth.org

Test Taking Tips: www.testtakingtips.com