



Anxiety — You're Not Alone

Understanding anxiety, and the ways out

Recover • Rebalance • Revive



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PATIENT GUIDE

Dr Reguram Sandrasegaram • Young Street Medical & Dental Centre

Common, draining — and very treatable.

Anxiety is one of the most common reasons people see their GP. It can feel exhausting and lonely — but it's also one of the most treatable mental health conditions, with several paths that genuinely work.

1 in 7
 Australian adults experience anxiety in any year

1 in 4
 will experience it at some point in life

Treatable
 with therapy, lifestyle changes and (sometimes) medicine

What anxiety actually is

It's your alarm system, stuck on
 Anxiety is normal fear, switched on too often or too strongly. Your body thinks there's danger when there isn't.

It's not weakness
 It runs in families, follows stressful times, and affects very capable people. It's a health issue, not a character one.

Body and mind together
 Racing heart, tight chest, churning gut, restlessness, poor sleep, brain fog. These are real symptoms, not 'in your head'.

Worry that won't switch off
 Persistent 'what if...' thoughts, planning for unlikely disasters, struggling to relax even when nothing's wrong.

Many shapes
 Generalised worry, panic attacks, social anxiety, health anxiety, OCD — they overlap, and the same approaches often help all of them.

It often travels with low mood
 Many people have both anxiety and depression at once. Treating one usually helps the other — we look at the whole picture.

How treatment actually works
 The strongest evidence is for CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) — a short, practical talking therapy that retrains how your brain handles worry. Lifestyle, mindfulness and (for some) medication round out the approach. Most people improve.



Steps That Help

What you can do, what we can do, and where to turn

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Six things that genuinely help



Move your body

Regular activity reduces anxiety as much as some medicines. Walking, yoga, swimming — anything you'll actually keep doing.



Protect your sleep

Poor sleep ramps up anxiety; anxiety wrecks sleep. Steady sleep times and less screen time at night break the loop.



Easier on stimulants

Caffeine and energy drinks can fuel anxiety; alcohol calms it briefly but rebounds badly. Cutting back often helps within days.



Slow your breathing

Slow nasal breathing (out longer than in) calms the nervous system. A few minutes, several times a day, works better than once a week.



Try CBT

The gold-standard talking therapy. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan — Medicare covers up to 10 sessions a year.



Medicine, when it fits

Some people benefit from an antidepressant (often an SSRIs). They're not addictive and work alongside therapy, not against it.



Reach out today if:

- You're having thoughts of hurting yourself
- Anxiety is stopping you working, sleeping or eating
- Panic attacks are happening regularly
- Old strategies have stopped working



Help available now:

- ✓ Lifeline — 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis)
- ✓ Beyond Blue — 1300 22 4636 (anxiety & depression)
- ✓ NewAccess — free 6-session mental health coaching
- ✓ Book a GP appointment for a Mental Health Treatment Plan

You're not broken — and you're not alone

Anxiety is one of the most treatable conditions we manage in general practice.

Coming in is the hardest step. We'll figure out the right path from there. — Dr Regu