

# Got Test Anxiety?



Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety. A certain level of anxiety (or feeling nervous) is a good thing. It encourages us to do the work that goes into making a good grade on the test.

## Then, what's the problem?

When the anxiety is taken to the extreme, it can produce unwanted results such as psychological distress.

Students who have test anxiety may worry excessively about test results, even though they have the cognitive ability to do well. Students who experience test anxiety may also have the following symptoms.

- \***Physical:** Excessive sweating, increased heart rate, shortness of breath, headache, muscle tension, upset stomach, or panic attacks may occur.
- \***Emotional:** Feelings of worry and fear of failure may be present and students may experience higher levels of stress, making it more difficult to concentrate on the test.
- \***Behavioral/Cognitive:** Students may overemphasize the potential negatives ("I'll never be able to pass this test.") or even feel the need to answer *every* question correctly. They may have difficulty concentrating and may express anxiety behaviorally by waiting until the last minute to study.

## How can I help my child?

- \***Discourage negative thinking.** When your child makes statements such as, "I'm going to fail this test," ask them why they believe that. Also, don't be too anxious about your child's test scores. This can upset them. Instead, model being proactive by studying daily.
- \***Encourage realistic expectations.** We all want our children to do their best every time. However, if your child expresses a belief that they have to answer all of the questions correctly every time, be realistic with them. Everybody gets one wrong sometimes...and that's okay!
- \***Help your child to develop daily study habits...not just a night or two before the test.** Real learning happens when studying takes place over a period of time. Provide a quiet, organized area for studying. Help your child understand the information and relate it to what is already known.
- \***Provide a well-rounded diet for your child.** A healthy body helps the mind stay healthy and active throughout the day. Our cafeteria serves a free breakfast for all students from 7:30-8:15. This is a simple way to help your child get a great start to their day!
- \***Praise your child for what they do well.** Encourage them! Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes. When children feel good about themselves, they will do their best!