

PATIENT INFORMATION

Managing Anger

Anger is a normal emotion. It is common for people to feel angry at times in everyday life. When anger comes out in a controlled manner, it is a healthy way for a person to express their feelings. But when anger takes over and a person loses control, anger may be negative and hurtful. It is a good idea to watch for signs of too much anger and learn to control this anger so that your feelings are communicated in a healthy way.

Too much anger is considered a risk factor for heart disease. Anger is known to increase blood pressure, and heart rate, and it also may increase your chances of having a heart attack or other heart problems. Learning to control your anger is an important part of taking care of yourself and your heart.

What Are Signs of Too Much Anger?

You have too much anger when:

- You say or do things that you later feel bad about.
- You hang on to your anger for a long time.
- You hit, shove, slap, pinch or threaten when you get angry.
- You almost always feel angry about something.
- Sometimes you can't stop arguing even when you want to.
- You are either furious or calm. You are never just a little angry.
- You always have to get the last word and win every battle.
- You've been suspended from school, arrested or gotten kicked out of your house, or lost jobs because of your anger.
- You often hate yourself and do or say things to hurt yourself.
- You believe other people are the cause of most of your problems.

How Can I Prevent Anger?

Change your environment

- Try to predict when you know you will be in a stressful situation. Be prepared to leave the situation so you can have the time to think about what you are really upset about.
- Find ways to relax during the day (do stretching exercises like yoga). Breaks throughout the day can help you stay focused and relaxed.

Change the way you think

- Remember that it is not the end of the world and that getting angry is not going to fix the problem.
- Remember that getting angry usually makes the situation worse and increases negative emotions. Logic can overcome anger. Give yourself time to think through the best solution to the problem, rather than just reacting.

Improve Your Communication Skills

- Try not to let your anger build. Slow down and rethink the first things that come to mind when an argument takes place. Your choice of words is very important.
- Attack the problem not the person. Listen carefully to what they have to say and try not to argue.
- Take a few moments and decide the best course of action. Be patient with the other person and avoid put-downs. Compromise may be an option and lead to a solution that works for everyone.
- Respect each other and try to know when to quit. When it is over, let it be over.

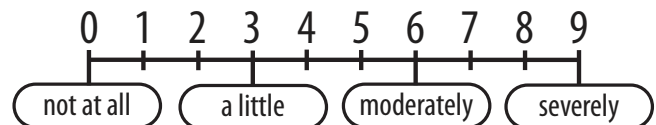
How Can I Control My Anger?

Use simple relaxation techniques to calm yourself if you feel your anger might get out of control. Here are some simple techniques you can use at the time:

- Take slow, deep breaths. These will help slow down your body's reaction and help you relax.
- Use your memory or your imagination to visualize a relaxing experience.
- Focus on finding a solution(s) to the problem. Avoid taking your anger out on someone. Place that energy into developing a plan that will resolve the situation and put it into action.
- Use humour to dissolve some of your pent up feelings. Reducing your rage through humour can bring a more calm and settling atmosphere, and help you attain a more balanced point of view.

When Should I Seek Help?

Ask yourself the following question. Over the last two weeks how much have I been bothered by feeling angry?



If you scored a 5 or more, it would be good to talk to your healthcare provider or a mental health professional about how you feel.

Most communities in BC have Mental Health Centers where you can find help for anger management problems. This treatment is usually free. Or, talk to your clinic nurse, or your family doctor, about other options that may be available to you.