

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Many people on dialysis experience depression and anxiety disorders. In fact, depression is one of the most common complications of chronic medical conditions.¹ One in 5 people will be affected by a mental illness in their lifetime.² Depression is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch; it's a serious mental health condition that requires understanding and treatment. Everyone experiences anxiety. However, when feelings of fear become overwhelming and prevents a person from doing everyday things, an anxiety disorder might be the reason. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness, affecting 40 million adults in the United States, or 18.1% of the population every year.³ The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly negatively impacted many people's mental health. During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 American adults have reported symptoms of anxiety or depression.⁴ There are various medication and treatment options, as well as lifestyle changes that can be used to help treat anxiety and depression.

THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO HELP WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Here is a list of things you can do right now to help with both anxiety and depression. These suggestions can be done virtually while we all continue to practice safe physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Get physically active.**
 - <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/stayfit>
- **Find a therapist.**
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- **Get plenty of sleep.**
 - <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene>
- **Improve your diet.**
 - <https://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-disease/kidney-failure/esrd-diet/#hemodialysis-diet>
- **Reduce substance use/alcohol consumption.**
 - <https://findtreatment.gov/>
- **Join a support group.**
 - <https://aakp.org/support-groups>
- **Increase your socialization.** Make regular dates with friends.
 - <https://www.meetup.com>
- **Find new hobbies.**
 - <https://psychcentral.com/blog/imperfect/2018/02/how-do-adults-find-new-hobbies>
- **Meditate.**
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/meditation>
- **Practice breathing exercises.**
 - <https://www.calmclinic.com/anxiety/treatment/breathing-exercises>



Get more information about mental health conditions, treatment and support by visiting <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>.

¹ Casarella, J. (2020). *Dealing with chronic illnesses and depression*. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from <https://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/chronic-illnesses-depression>

² National Alliance on Mental Illness <https://www.nami.org/>

³ Anxiety & Depression Association of America <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/facts-statistics>

⁴ Panchal, N., Kamal, R., Cox, C., and Garfield, R. (2021). *The implications of COVID-19 for mental health and substance use*. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>

To file a grievance, please contact your designated ESRD Network below.

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