

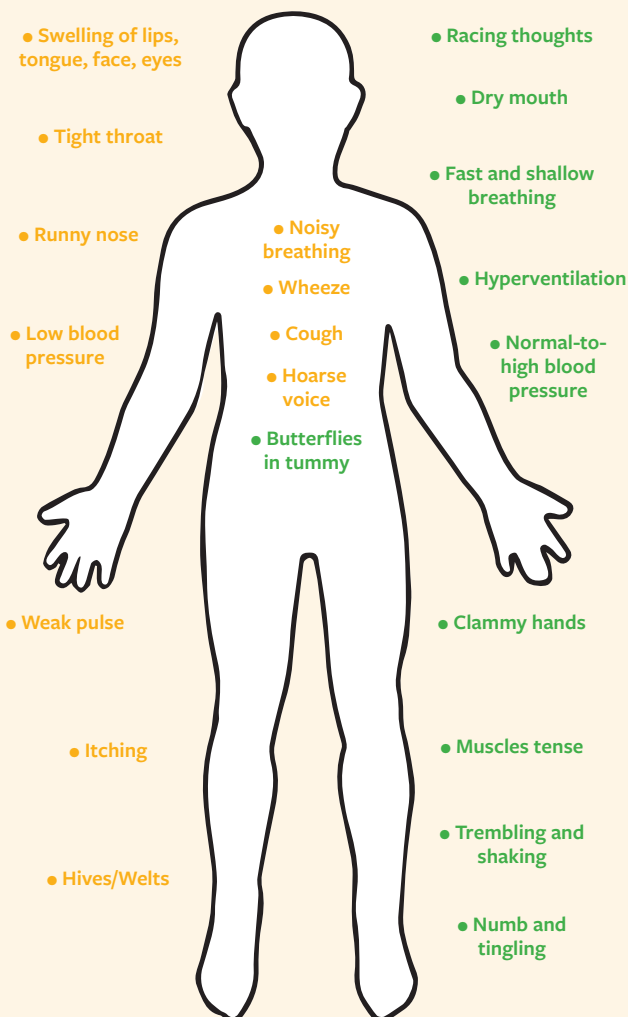
WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a normal response to the challenges we face on a day-to-day basis. Anxiety is our body's smoke alarm system to keep us safe from danger. When you have a food allergy, your alarm system can be more sensitive because you're living with a potentially life-threatening condition. Like a smoke alarm it can be helpful. For example, when you have a food allergy some level of anxiety can help motivate you to check food labels and remember to bring your EpiPen® with you!

Unfortunately, smoke alarms sometimes also go off when you have burnt toast. So it's important to recognise a false alarm when it comes to anxiety!

So how do we recognise when our smoke alarm has gone off? The tricky thing about allergy and anxiety is that they can feel very similar.

Here are some signs of ALLERGY VS. ANXIETY



Anxiety can range from helpful to unhelpful levels



Helpful:	Unhelpful:	Severe:
Able to do what you want/need to do without much difficulty.	Uncomfortable thoughts and feelings that start getting in the way.	Panic, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Changes to sleep or eating patterns.

Signs of when anxiety is getting unhelpful:

Thoughts

- Worried thoughts that are hard to shake off
- Unpleasant/distressing thoughts or images
- Stressful memories

Feelings

- Loss of confidence/feeling low
- Stress
- Panic

Behaviour

- Not going out
- Troubles with eating food (even safe foods)
- Spending lots of time checking
- Not doing the things you want to do or need to do

Spot the unhelpful anxiety!

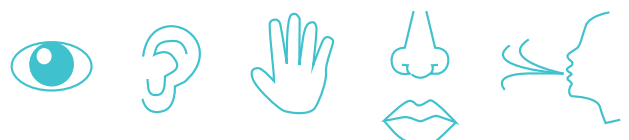
1. Going to a restaurant and double checking your order with the waiter
2. A friend asks you out to a restaurant you haven't been and you say 'No' in case they get your order wrong
3. Sleeping over at a friend's place and choosing not to bring your EpiPen® in case they judge you
4. You're dating someone new and purposely don't tell them you have an allergy because you're worried about what they'll think
5. Checking your school bag to make sure you have your EpiPen® on you before you leave the house

Answers: 1-5 (Helpful) 2-4 (Unhelpful)

A handy exercise to tackle anxiety!

A great way to press pause on anxiety is to focus our attention away from anxiety. We can use our senses to help us do this! Try the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise:

Noticing 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel, 2 things you taste/smell, 1 deep breath.



This is a skill that takes practise, so try to find a moment each day to practise.

WHEN TO GET HELP

If you notice that you can relate to some of the signs of anxiety, it can be helpful to reach out and get support. About 1 in 7 young people in Australia will experience anxiety at high levels, so needing help is a common!

WHERE TO GET HELP

Talking to your friendly neighbourhood psychologist can be a great place to get help! This could be your school counsellor, or you could see a psychologist by getting a **referral from a GP**. A great way to find a psychologist is through:

1. www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist
2. Or giving your local Headspace a call/message: headspace.org.au/headspace-centres

If you prefer to chat online, here are some websites where you can chat to a professional online:

Headspace: www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace

Kids Helpline: www.kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling

These are also some awesome organisations that can help:

▶ ALLERGY & ANAPHYLAXIS AUSTRALIA

- a national support organisation for people managing allergies including the risk of anaphylaxis

1300 728 000

www.allergyfacts.org.au

Facebook: facebook.com/AnaphylaxisAustralia

Instagram: instagram.com/allergicaustralia

▶ 250K

- an information hub for the 250 000 Australian teens and young adults with severe allergies

www.250k.org.au

Facebook: facebook.com/250k.org.au

Instagram: instagram.com/allergy250k

AND HERE ARE SOME GREAT APPS THAT CAN HELP!



FOR MORE APPS GO TO:
au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps