

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) TIPS TO MANAGE TESTING ANXIETY

So, you've had the nose swab. And now comes the hard part...waiting for your results.

By the time this health crisis is over, many of us will be very familiar with the feeling known as anticipatory anxiety. This is when our thoughts and bodies are consumed with worst-case scenarios, dread and fear for what might come. It is a normal response; but it's not always helpful, and it can be really uncomfortable. Recognize anticipatory anxiety and take steps to interrupt the downward spiral.

5 "D's" FOR GETTING THROUGH THE ANXIETY THAT COMES WITH WAITING FOR TEST RESULTS



DISTANCE

We already know to distance from people, but distance from stuff - the microwave handle, the toothpaste, the kettle, the hand towel... all the things at home that might be shared with family and/or roommates. The best approach is set up your own food and bathroom areas, and to restrict yourself to one part of the home. This will help give you focus and a sense of control.



DISCONNECT

Try to disconnect from COVID-19 news and social media. Most importantly, disconnect from your thoughts and worries. Distractions are useful for interrupting anticipatory anxiety. This can be any activity that consumes your mind and puts you in the flow of things. That could be knitting, online yoga class, sports tutorial or even repetitive walking. You have to choose what works for you!



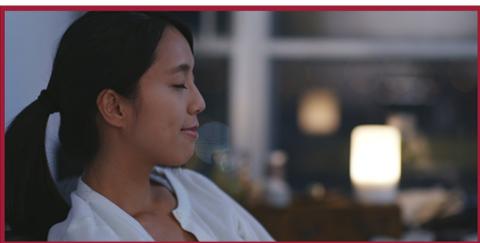
DEVELOP A BUDDY SYSTEM

Find a couple of people outside of your family household – perhaps a friend and a colleague and start doing daily check-ins—a buddy system of sorts. This helps keep anxiety down, and is mutually beneficial. You don't need to spend all of the time talking about your concerns, just a few short daily texts. You will have comfort from knowing that someone has your back!



DESIGNATE WORRY TIME

Give yourself a 10-minute worry block every day. During those 10 minutes, write down everything that you're worried about, and then step away. Instead of holding onto all that worry in silence - writing it down is a way of releasing it. Control the experience around the testing versus trying to control what the outcome of the test will be, which is beyond your control.



DIAPHRAGM BREATHING

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; on the exhale, count slowly back down to one. Repeat several times to bring about quick relaxation. It's also an effective method to use when you're having a difficult time getting to sleep.