

Symptoms of depression and anxiety

If you live with epilepsy, or care for someone who does, it is important to look out for any symptoms of depression or anxiety and seek help as soon as possible. Depression and anxiety can have a profound impact on your quality of life, family, and daily living. As with any chronic illness, getting an early diagnosis and appropriate medical treatment is important to reduce the intensity and duration of symptoms, and decrease the risk of recurrence.

Some possible anxiety symptoms include:

- constant worry that is hard to stop
- ongoing feelings of restlessness or muscle tension
- difficulty sleeping feeling sweaty
- hot and cold flushes
- racing heart.

There are many different types of anxiety and symptoms of more specific types of anxiety may include:

- obsessive thoughts
- compulsive behaviour
- ongoing worry about the possibility of experiencing a panic attack
- excessive fear of specific experiences (e.g. public speaking/ heights).

Some possible depression symptoms include:

- feeling down for a prolonged period (most days for at least two weeks)
- difficulty finding enjoyment
- withdrawal from close family and friends
- lack of motivation
- difficulty sleeping
- changes in appetite



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- irritability, frustration or anger
- difficulty forming and maintaining friendships
- lack of self-care and/or risk of self-harm
- risk taking behaviour
- fear of rejection or judgement by others.

Depression and anxiety, as well as the impact of living with epilepsy or other life circumstances, can cause suicidal thoughts in some people.

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, or are worrying that another person is feeling this way, it is important to talk about it and seek support promptly.

There are a number of places to get help in New Zealand.

The Mental Health Foundation website is a good place to start [here](#).