

Alcohol, Anxiety and Depression

Does this sound like you?

We all experience times of poor physical health in our life, and it is the same for our mental health. Consider the questions listed below which outline some common feelings. If you answer “yes” to some of these questions it’s a good idea to see your doctor for a professional assessment.

Do you feel:

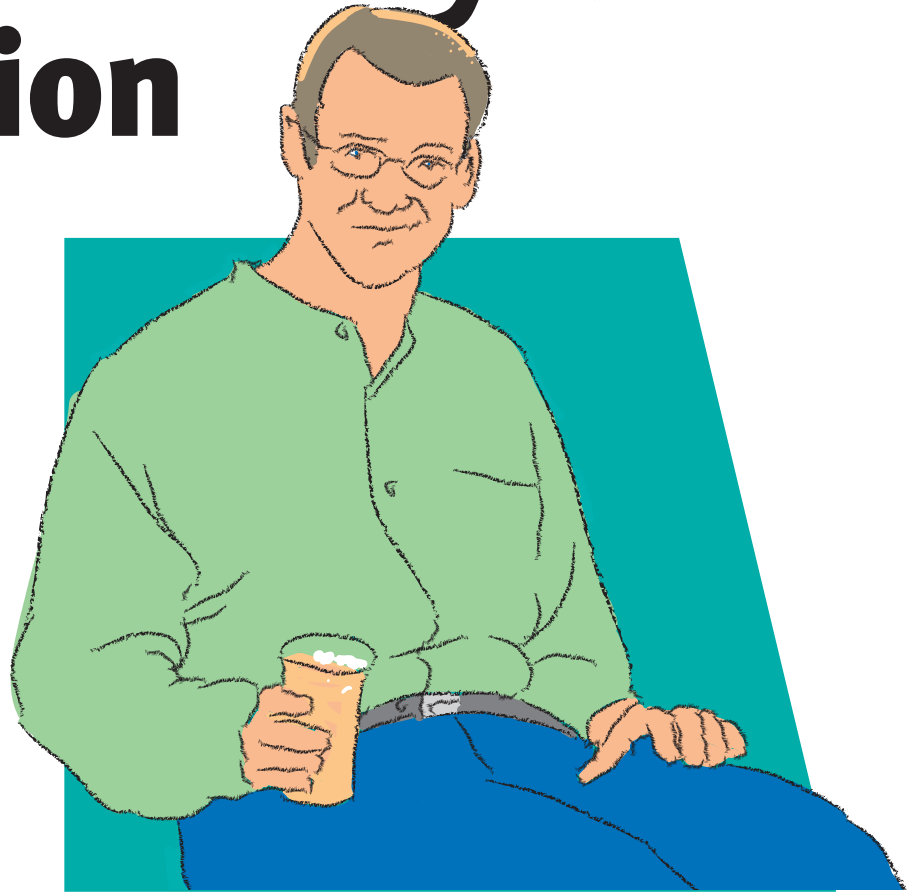
- tired and run down?
- sad and hopeless?
- irritable much of the time?
- like you don’t want to do anything?
- that you may never feel happy again?
- confused and don’t know what is happening to you?
- Are you having difficulty sleeping, waking in the early hours and not being able to get back to sleep, or are you finding it difficult to get up in the morning?

Or do you feel:

- worried and anxious much of the time?
- as though your heart is pounding?
- as though something dreadful is about to happen?
- that you are withdrawing from your normal activities?
- like you have knots and butterflies in your stomach when faced with a difficult situation, or find yourself avoiding situations that cause you to feel uncomfortable and anxious?

And:

- have you ever thought you drink too much?
- has a friend, relative or doctor ever been concerned about your drinking?
- do you regularly have more than four drinks on any one occasion?
- do you drink to cope with stress, loneliness, anger, or sleeplessness?
- have you tried to cut down or stop drinking without success?



If this sounds like you, it is time to talk to your GP. You may be suffering from depression, anxiety and/or alcohol problems. These are the most common mental health problems affecting people in Australia. Depression affects one in five people, and anxiety disorders affect at least one in eight people in Australia at some time in their lifetime. Your GP will be able to help you and provide effective treatment for these problems. If required, your GP can also refer you to a specialist for extra help.

Effective treatments are available. Early identification and care can reduce harm and improve your quality of life.

Questions to ask your GP

Good questions to ask a GP can include:

- Why don't I feel well?
- What can I do about it?
- Are there any other options?
- Where can I find out more information?
- When do I need to see you again?
- How often do I need to see you?
- How can I stay healthy?
- Is this something you can treat or will you refer me to someone else?
- Can you refer me to someone if I am not getting better?
- How can my family be involved, and where can they get information?
- What support is available for my family and my children?
- Are interpreters available to assist me if required?

Handy Hints:

- Let your GP know if you are getting help from anyone else, such as other doctors, self-help groups, family and friends, or natural therapists.
- Remember to provide your GP with your full list of medications (including over-the-counter medications, vitamins and natural therapies) because he or she may not be aware of everything you have been prescribed (particularly if you also see other doctors).
- If you are uncertain or nervous about speaking to a GP, take a friend or family member with you. He or she can also help you to remember information provided by your GP.
- Ask your GP for a general health check to see what else might be adding to the way you feel. For example, heavy snoring can cause bad sleep.
- Many general practices can provide a practice nurse to help you with your appointments. You can speak to a practice nurse if you are uncertain or nervous about speaking to a GP.
- Many GPs are registered with a new mental health initiative.

