What Patients and Families can do to Prevent Depression and Anxiety

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Make sure you do your CF treatments every day. Setting up routines can help!
- Attend appointments at your care center regularly and complete recommended mental health and physical screenings.

Address your physical symptoms early.
- There is a two-way connection between depression/anxiety and physical symptoms. For example, pain is depressing and depression causes and intensifies pain.

Plan for potentially painful medical procedures.
- Preparation can help reduce stress and anxiety. Develop a coping plan: relaxation, imagery, massage, thermal measures, music, and play activities (for children). Pharmacological interventions may be warranted such as medications for procedural pain/comfort or anxiety.
- For parents: learn the details of the procedure so you can prepare your child and tailor the information to their age and level of understanding. Children need clear and honest information. If you need assistance, a health care provider (ex. child life specialist) can help you find the right words. Younger children may benefit from “playing” a procedure before they go through it. Provide distraction. Encourage your child to bring along a favorite object.

Exercise every day.
- Not only can exercise benefit your health, but physically active people are at reduced risk of developing depression. Exercise is also associated with benefits for patients with mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

Practice good sleep habits.
- Go to bed and wake up on a consistent schedule (even on weekends). Keep your bedroom quiet and at a comfortable temperature. Do not read or watch TV in bed. Avoid caffeine and exercise at least 2 hours prior to going to bed. Wind down with relaxing activities before bed.

Eat a well-balanced diet and limit caffeine.
- A diet rich in certain nutrients such as B12/folate, vitamin D, selenium, and omega-3 fatty acids may help reduce the risk of anxiety and depression. Meet with the dietician on your team as they are experts in food and nutrition.

Get outside in the sunlight.
- Daily exposure to sunlight can lessen symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Make time for things you enjoy.
- Schedule activities and stay engaged.

Take steps to control stress.
- Learn ways to cope with stressful situations. Take deep breaths, listen to music or practice mindfulness and meditation. Participation in yoga may have an uplifting effect on your mood and is also a stress management tool.

Reach out to family and friends.
- Talk with someone you trust. Support from family, friends and community involvement can help lessen stress.

Promote open communication with your CF team.
- It is very important that your team understands the challenges you face with your daily treatments and if you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression.

Partner with the CF Psychologist or member of the psychosocial team.
- We are here to help support you when things are going well and when you are experiencing stress. We want to help prevent symptoms of depression and anxiety and can also help treat these symptoms when they occur.