



# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

## HUMAN SERVICE CENTER - FSUS LOCATION

### MENTAL HEALTH INFO FOR PARENTS:

# TEST ANXIETY

How it affects your child and how you can help

### What is it?

A type of performance anxiety related to test taking; similar to anxiety right before an important sport game, speech, or other similar life events

### What it is not!

Anxiety caused by other stressors in the student's life unrelated to the test (e.g., death of a loved one).

### Symptoms



#### Physical

- Sweating
- Shaking
- Butterflies in stomach
- Increased heart rate
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Possibly fainting



#### Mental

- Forgetting material you had studied
- Poor concentration
- Negative self-talk
- Racing thoughts
- Catastrophizing thoughts



#### Behavioral

- Avoidant behavior
- Fidgeting
- Sleeplessness
- Substance abuse



#### Emotional

- Anger
- Depression
- Decreased self-esteem
- Hopelessness



## Causes

1. Fear of failure
2. Lack of preparation
3. Poor testing history

## Princeton Review's Top 10 Ways to Overcome Test Anxiety

1. Be prepared - study, review difficult concepts and possible questions
2. Get a good night's sleep - good rest will help with mood and energy levels
3. Fuel up - a nutritional breakfast will provide a good source of energy throughout the day; avoid foods that can lead to sugar crashes.
4. Arrive early - the fear of being late will only increase your anxiety the day of the test; prepare everything you need to take the night before.
5. Keep a positive mental attitude - challenge negative self-talk with positive statements.
6. Read directions and questions carefully - slow down and stay focused
7. Just start - dive into the test after reviewing the instructions; you can always go back and review what you answered.
8. Focus only on yourself - don't pay attention to what anyone else is doing; it doesn't matter if the first person finishes while you are still working.
9. Watch the clock - mentally allocate how much time you will need for each question and try to keep that pace.
10. Focus on calm breathing and positive thoughts - deep breathing can calm racing thoughts and help relax your body, protecting against those anxious feelings.

## Resources

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/test-anxiety>

<https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/test-anxiety>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-test-anxiety-2795368>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/test-anxiety.html>