

Weller Health Tip for Kids: Worry Less in 3 Steps

Everybody worries. Grown-ups do it and kids do it, too. But what should you do about it? Whether your worries are big or small, you can take these 3 steps:

Try to figure out what you're worried about.

Think about ways to make the situation better.

Ask for help.

1. Figure it out.

Sometimes, you will know exactly what you're worried about. Other times, you might not know exactly what's bugging you. Let's say you're worried about a teacher who seems mean. But maybe what's really bothering you is that you're having trouble with math. If you get some help with math, that teacher might seem just fine.

Some problems, like family problems, are big and have a lot of parts. That can make it tough to zero in on what the problem is or to pick one part of the problem to try to solve. But being able to focus on your problem — or at least part of it — is the first step to taking action. If you're having trouble figuring out what worries you, skip to Step 3 and get some help from a parent or another person you trust.

2. Think of ways to make it better.

There is almost always something you can do to help you feel less worried. Sitting there worrying is no fun and it probably won't solve your problem. But switching to an action mode can help you feel more hopeful.

Grades at school are often a top worry for kids. If that's your concern, ask yourself these questions:

Why are grades important? What do they mean to me?

How do I prepare for class? Do I review my notes even when there isn't a test the next day?

Do I have a good place to do my homework?

Have I tried different ways of studying, such as rewriting notes, using flashcards, and working with a study buddy?

If your worry is about a fight you had with a friend, you might write down all the actions you could take — from writing the friend a note to inviting him or her over for a game of basketball. Should you apologize for whatever happened between the two of you? Once you have a list of possible actions, you can select the one you think is most likely to get your friendship back on track.

But what if you can't think of anything to do to make your particular problem better? Then it's time to jump to Step 3 (it's the next step anyway) and ask someone for help.

3. Ask for help.

Worrying can make you feel lonely. When you're worried, it can help to find someone to talk to. Sometimes people say, "Why should I bother? He/she can't do anything about it." But here are two reasons to give it a shot anyway:

You don't know for sure that no one can help until you share your feelings and let the person try to help.

Just the act of telling someone what's bothering you can make you feel a little better. Afterward, you are no longer alone with your worries and whomever you told (parent, sister, brother, friend, counselor) is now is thinking about ways to help you.

A Final Word About Worry

Did you know worry is not all bad? If you weren't worried (at least a little) about that test, you might not study for it. And if you weren't worried about getting sunburned, you might not wear your sunscreen.

But some kids worry so much that it keeps them from doing the stuff they need and want to do. If that sounds like you, you know what to do by now: Turn to good old Step 3 and ask someone for help.