

- Start by taking one day at a time. You might then expand to thinking a week ahead.
- Think about times where you have felt uncertain in the past. What helped you to manage this?
- Speak to other people about how they have managed uncertainty.
- Try to pay attention to the here and now. An approach called Mindfulness can help people to practise doing this. Please see <http://bemindful.co.uk/> for more information. Or ask your GP about whether there may be any local mindfulness courses.

### What can I do if I would like extra support?

You can speak to your GP or one of your medical team for advice. They may be able to provide you with information that you might need or make a referral to any services that may be helpful e.g:

- Counselling
- Psychology
- Signposting to support groups/organisations.

Department of Clinical Psychology

St Helens Hospital  
Marshall Cross Road,  
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA  
Telephone: 01744 646864



# Uncertainty and Physical Health Conditions

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**Author:** Clinical Psychologist  
**Department:** Clinical Psychology  
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## What do we mean by uncertainty?

When you have a chronic health condition it is common to experience uncertainty. Life might now seem less secure than it has done. You might also feel that you don't always have answers.

You might feel uncertain about:

- Your health
- Your treatment
- The future
- How you will cope

## Living with uncertainty

Uncertainty affects people in different ways. Some people can live with uncertainty and continue to do the things that are important to them. Other people may find living with uncertainty to be very challenging. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Some of the things that people may do when they feel uncertain can include:

- Putting plans on hold
- Predicting that the worst may happen, when they don't have answers
- Thinking ahead to the future and what it may hold

We can never be certain about everything in life. However, people will sometimes do some of the things mentioned above, if they find uncertainty hard to tolerate. This may leave them feeling 'stuck', as it can make it harder to focus on the here and now and on doing those things that are important or enjoyable.

This also means more time to worry!

If you find living with uncertainty hard, or you feel that it stops you from doing what you enjoy, there are ways to help you manage.

## Managing uncertainty

The following can help you to manage uncertainty:

- Build working relationships with your health care team. Don't be afraid to ask them questions if you have them.
- Eat well, get enough sleep, and do some physical exercise. This is something that you can control. Speak to your health care team if you need support with this.
- Spend time with your family and friends.
- Plan activities and set yourself small, achievable goals. When planning activities – be aware of the expectations that you have put on yourself. Are they reasonable?
- Spend time focusing on things not related to your illness.
- Practise relaxing – you could try gentle exercise, yoga, massage, or alternative therapies. Find what works for you.
- Talking about your feelings can sometimes help to reduce distress. You could try talking to someone you trust, or attend a support group.