

# Controlling Anger

Everyone feels angry now and then. Usually it just means feeling annoyed about something and it goes away. But in some people anger can lead to rage. If this happens a lot, it may frighten you. You may feel out of control.

## Why shouldn't I get angry?

Being angry makes you feel like attacking someone else. If you attack a friend with words, you may lose your friend. If you are angry at work, you may lose your job. If you are angry while you are driving, you could cause a serious accident. If you shake or hit your baby because you are angry, you could cause serious injuries or even death. Anger also makes you more likely to turn to alcohol or drugs.

## What happens when I get angry?

Anger involves a chain of events where one thing leads to another. It is important to understand what makes you angry. The first link in the chain is **EVENTS** in daily life. These could be a traffic jam, or the way people talk to you, or the way someone looks while they are talking.

The second link in the chain of anger is how you **SEE** these events. You may think someone does not respect you, or wants to annoy you.

The third link in the chain is how you **FEEL** about the event. Your heart may beat faster. You may breathe faster. Your face may become red.

The fourth link is the **ACTION** you take. This may be shouting, hitting, crying or saying mean things to someone. Or it may be speeding up to catch a driver you are angry with and losing control of your car.

## What can I do to control my anger?

We cannot change what happens in life. We can only change how we react. First, think about things that make you angry. Then think of what you say to yourself when these things happen to you. Are there other ways you can look at these events?

Decide on what you will do the next time you feel angry. This could be counting to 10, walking away, stopping the car, talking to yourself, or taking deep breaths. Talking with someone else also helps. Your nurse, doctor, social worker or minister can help. Or look in the community section of your phone book for a Crisis Clinic or lists of support groups.



## Crib Sheets

Health information about pregnancy, parenting and infant care from the University of Washington School of Nursing.

For additional information, email [stepup@u.washington.edu](mailto:stepup@u.washington.edu)