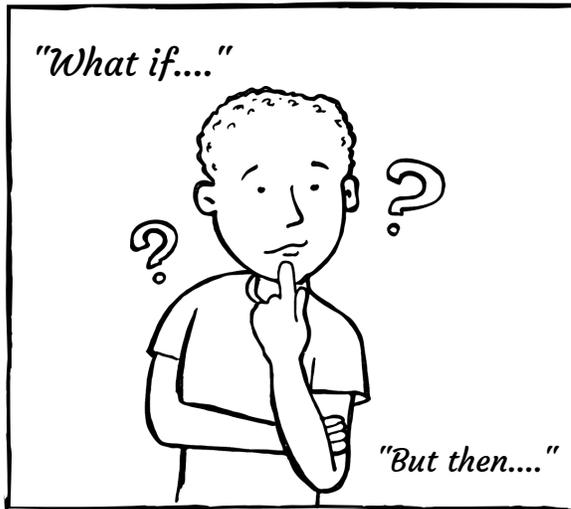


Managing Food Allergy Worries and "What ifs"

Naming, Noticing, and Navigating Your Food Allergy-Related Worries



"What if" thoughts can be helpful and prepare you for hard tasks, such as doing well on a test. But sometimes, these thoughts make you feel worried instead of prepared. And when they enter your mind, they can be very convincing!

"What if" thoughts and worries can:

- Make you believe that something bad will happen or make you believe that something is true - even when it's not
- Make you doubt your ability to get through hard situations
- Make your body feel unwell; you may have an upset stomach, or feel dizzy, hot and sweaty, or maybe breathe more quickly

So What Helps When You're Feeling Very Worried?

NAME the Worries

- Give them a name so you know what they are
- Describe them in detail: *What do they say will happen? Do you avoid safe things because of these worries?*

Example: The "unsafe when eating" worry - it keeps me from trying new foods or even eating some foods I know are safe for me, because I believe I will have an allergic reaction if I eat anything new.

NOTICE How the Worries Make Your Body Feel

- Notice how your body feels: *Does anything feel different? Does your body feel unwell?*
- Rate how big your worries feel on a 1-4 scale:
 - 1= small worries, 2= medium worries, 3= large worries, 4= giant worries

Example: My worries feel big - a level 3. I notice my stomach feels upset and I start to feel hot when I'm worried. That makes me think I'm having an allergic reaction, so then I get even more worried.

RESPOND to the Worries

Strategies that may help...

- **Get Active** - Take deep breaths or get active to help release the energy building up inside of you
- **Challenge It** - Find facts to prove your worries aren't true/are exaggerated, or learn what parts are true
- **Talk Back to It** - Respond to your worries with positive self-talk and empowering words
- **Practice It** - Practice skills to increase your confidence and decrease how big your worries feel

Example: I'm going to make a list of my worries to ask my allergist about so that I can use that information to challenge my worries and to remind myself that I know how to keep myself safe when eating.

Directions:

Using the outline on the first page as your guide, use this worksheet to complete the activity, focusing on your own food allergy worries. (Make copies of this page for future use.)

✔ While this worksheet helps you identify and begin to address your worries, please reach out to a licensed clinical mental health professional if you feel you need more support. Visit www.FoodAllergyCounselor.com for more resources.

NAME the Worries

Give them a name you can remember. Describe them in detail. What do they say will happen? What do you avoid?

NOTICE How the Worries Make Your Body Feel

What feelings do you notice in your body? Does your body feel unwell? Do you move differently when worried?

RESPOND to the Worries:

Circle how you will respond to your worries, and write your plans below. Include as much detail as possible.

(Get Active)

(Challenge It)

(Talk back to It)

(Practice It)

Follow Up Activity:

After completing the activity, use this page to reflect on how your worries feel now. Did the actions you took help decrease your worries? (Make copies of this page for future use).

The name for my worries:

My initial worry rating was:

My response to my worries was:

How I felt afterwards / my new worry rating:

What helped me manage my worries the most?

If I don't feel like my worries responded well to this activity, what can I try next?