



Anxiety and Nervousness

Natural ways to reduce your stress level

Everyone experiences a little nervousness now and then. We often get butterflies in our stomach and a little pounding sensation in our chest when we are faced with a new and uncomfortable situation. When a person experiences mild to severe apprehension or uneasiness over an event, with symptoms such as cold sweat, heart palpitations, trembling, faintness, a sense of pressure in the chest area over the heart, and/or dry mouth, they are experiencing anxiety. While everyone experiences anxiety occasionally, sometimes anxiety can be so frequent and severe that it becomes debilitating. One can even “freeze” due to a panic attack. A panic attack occurs when a state of anxiety is so severe that the person begins to breathe in a rapid, shallow manner and become tense to the point of cramping and inability to act.

Anxiety may be situationally-related, or it can be general in nature. There are many causes, including traumatic experiences, an overly anxious mother that induced a lot of fear into a person as a child, or just too many stressful situations. It can also be linked to drugs, nutritional deficiencies, and certain specific health problems such as hyperthyroidism, hypoglycemia, and asthma.

Generally speaking, anxiety is a symptom of an imbalance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. This is often due to prolonged stress which exhausts and depletes the adrenal glands. In most people, severe anxiety and panic attacks may be relieved by using herbs that calm down the sympathetic nervous system and increase the parasympathetic nervous system activity. Herbs such as valerian, passion flower, hops, chamomile, lavender, lobelia, and kava kava all fall into this category. Two herbal formulas that may be helpful in easing acute anxiety are STR-J and HVP.

In the case of panic attacks, two herbs are really helpful—lobelia and kava kava. Both are antispasmodic nervines which relax the muscles of the body, slowing breathing and heart rate. This is best done by using these herbs in liquid form and administering a dropperful every 2-3 minutes with water, while encouraging the person to breathe slowly and deeply. If liquids aren't available, break capsules open and empty the powders directly into the mouth. Use one capsule every five minutes. Continue administering the herbs until the heart rate slows and the person is able to breathe in a relaxed manner.

Inhaling essential oils can also be helpful in easing anxiety and panic attacks. Some essential oils that have been known to ease anxiety include lavender, CO₂ chamomile, Roman chamomile, Inner Peace and Tranquility. Reducing intake of refined sugar and carbohydrates and avoiding caffeine can also help reduce both the frequency and the severity of anxiety attacks.

An exception to the above is when a person has a parasympathetic dominant nervous system. In these cases, it is often necessary to give a mild stimulus to the sympathetic nervous system and calm down the parasympathetic nervous system to ease anxiety. Citrus oils such as lemon, grapefruit, and bergamot will be calming in these cases. For people with a parasympathetic dominant nervous system, a little green or black tea or other caffeine-bearing substance can be helpful in reducing anxiety. Suma Combination is very helpful for reducing anxiety in parasympathetic dominant people.

You can tell whether you will need to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system or the sympathetic nervous system by looking at the person's pupils. If they are enlarged, then calm down the sympathetic nerves and enhance the parasympathetic. If the pupils are tiny and contracted, then the person is parasympathetic dominant, and agents that stimulate the sympathetic nervous system and calm down the parasympathetic nervous system will be needed.

If the pupils are pulsing, check and see if their tongue quivers. If so, then the adrenals are exhausted. Nervous Fatigue Formula is an excellent choice in these cases. It relieves feelings of tension in the chest and promotes more restful sleep. Pantothenic acid can also help rebuild exhausted adrenals.

People with blood type A are more prone to anxiety and panic because they have a harder time breaking down the stress hormones produced by the adrenal glands. Adaptagens are very helpful for anxiety-prone people like those with blood type A. Adaptagens work on the pituitary and hypothalamus to reduce the output of stress hormones from the adrenal glands. Some adaptagens include Eleuthero root, schizandra and maca. Nervous Fatigue Formula and Nutri-Calm both have adaptagenic properties.

Nutri-Calm is a B complex vitamin supplement with vitamin C, nervines and adaptagens. It is very helpful for people who are easily wound up and under a lot of stress and emotional pressure. It feeds both the nerves and the adrenals, helping a person stay productive while feeling more relaxed.

When anxiety is coupled with depression, herbs like lemon balm and St. John's wort may be helpful. Mood Elevator can also help anxiety that is coupled with depression.

Anxiety can be overcome naturally. Consult a qualified natural health consultant to determine the program that is right for you.

Selected References

Encyclopedia of Natural Healing by Michael Murray, ND, and Joseph Pizzorno, ND

Prescription for Nutritional Healing by James F. Balch, MD, and Phyllis A. Balch, CNC

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