

Get a Grip on Anxiety

By Michael T. Murray, ND

If you think prescription medications are the only option for anxiety and panic attacks, you'll be happy to know about these very effective natural solutions



If you've never experienced anxiety or panic attacks, it's hard to imagine just how uncomfortable they can be. More than 20 million Americans suffer from anxiety—medically defined as "an unpleasant emotional state ranging from mild unease to intense fear." While fear is a rational response to danger, anxiety usually lacks a clear or realistic cause. Severe anxiety will often produce panic attacks—intense feelings of fear. These attacks are most often associated with agoraphobia, an intense fear of being alone or being in public places.

The Cause Most Doctors Ignore

Both psychological stress and biochemical factors—such as caffeine and drug use—can trigger anxiety and panic attacks. Elevated levels of lactic acid in the blood is also one of the most significant biochemical factors. When the body lacks oxygen, lactate is the final product in the breakdown of blood sugar. In fact, injecting anxiety sufferers with lactate can produce severe panic attacks. In normal individuals, however, nothing happens. So it appears that individuals with anxiety may be sensitive to lactate. It stands to reason, then, that reducing lactate levels should be a priority, yet most physicians ignore this goal.

Reducing Lactate Levels

There are six nutritional factors that may be responsible for elevated lactate levels in individuals with anxiety:

1. Alcohol
2. Caffeine
3. Sugar
4. Deficiency of the B vitamins niacin, vitamin B6, and thiamin (B1)
5. Deficiency of calcium and/or magnesium
6. Food allergies

Avoiding alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and food allergens goes a long way toward relieving symptoms in people with anxiety. In fact, just eliminating coffee can, in some cases, relieve symptoms completely. In one study of four men and two women with generalized anxiety who drank 1.5—3.5 cups of coffee per day, avoiding caffeine for one week brought about significant symptom relief. The degree of improvement was so noticeable that all patients volunteered to continue abstaining from caffeine after the study.

Magnesium: The Calming Mineral

Magnesium is essential in more than 300 biochemical reactions of the human body, and a deficiency has been reported to lead to symptoms of anxiety, depression, irritability, fear, insomnia, confusion, and memory loss.

In one double-blind study, 264 people diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder were given either a placebo or 300 mg of magnesium. The magnesium group had a statistically significant reduction in symptoms. For best results, use a highly absorbable form of magnesium, such as magnesium citrate and magnesium glycinate.

Omega-3 Fats

Anxiety also appears to be linked to low levels of omega-3 fatty acids. Studies using omega-3-rich fish oils to treat anxiety have shown impressive results. In one trial, fish oil was shown to decrease anger and anxiety in substance abusers. In another, 2.5 grams daily of omega-3 fats produced a 20 percent reduction in anxiety symptoms.

Flaxseed oil, a vegetarian source of omega-3 fats, has also been shown to help ease anxiety. In one study, three out of four patients with a history of agoraphobia improved within two to three months of taking flaxseed (2—6 Tbs. daily, in divided doses).

Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA)

GABA is a neurotransmitter found throughout the central nervous system. Low levels or decreased GABA function in the brain is associated with anxiety, depression, insomnia, and epilepsy. In fact, many popular anti-anxiety drugs interact primarily with GABA receptors.

Significant antistress effects have been shown in clinical studies with PharmaGABA, a proprietary form of GABA. Patients given PharmaGABA reported feeling relaxed and experienced changes in brain wave patterns consistent with a state of relaxation. The typical dosage used in studies is 100—200 mg up to three times daily.

Ashwagandha

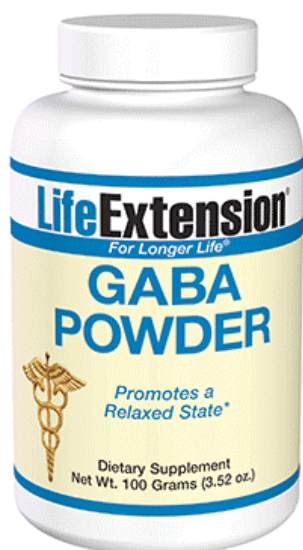
In clinical trials, Sensoril, a proprietary extract of the herb ashwagandha, has been shown to produce considerable anti-stress effects. In one double-blind human study, chronically stressed subjects taking Sensoril had significant reductions in anxiety along with positive changes in blood chemistry, adrenal hormone levels, energy levels, and feelings of wellness. A typical dosage is 125—250 mg daily.

Dr. Murray's New Book!

From two world-renowned naturopathic doctors—Joseph Pizzorno, ND, and *Better Nutrition* “Second Opinion” columnist Michael T. Murray—comes *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*, the authoritative 3rd edition of the classic reference work, revised and expanded to include the latest cutting-edge natural therapies for the most common ailments. Murray and Pizzorno focus on promoting health and treating disease with nontoxic, natural therapies, and this one-of-a-kind book shows you how to improve your health through a positive mental attitude, healthy lifestyle, health-promoting diet, and supplements, with plenty of practical tips.

- With natural approaches for treating more than 70 common ailments, *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine* includes information on:
 - How to learn disease prevention through enhancing key body systems.
 - The major causes and symptoms of each condition.
 - The therapeutic considerations you need to be aware of most.
 - Detailed treatment summaries that include the most effective nutritional supplements and botanical medicines.

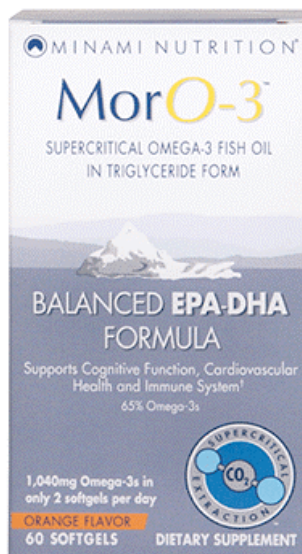
This book is a perfect introduction to the world of natural medicine, providing clear guidance in the use of the best natural remedies for all kinds of illnesses, big and small. *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine* is a valuable health reference. To learn more, visit doctormurray.com.



Life Extension

GABA Powder

Promote relaxation and ease anxiety with this powerful supplement that contains no soy, dairy, gluten, sugar, artificial sweeteners, flavors, colors, or preservatives.



Minami Nutrition

MorO-3 Balanced EPA-DHA Formula

delivers a whopping 1,040 mg of omega-3 fatty acids in just two softgels. With a clean, orange flavor, no fishy aftertaste, and a balanced ratio of EPA to DHA.



Natural Factors

Stress-Relax Sensoril

Clinically proven to help inhibit fatigue, tension, and exhaustion associated with stress, Sensoril is produced using a patented process for guaranteed ratios and concentrations of key constituents.

Michael T. Murray, ND, is the author of more than 30 books on natural health, including *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine, Third Edition*. He is regarded as one of the world's top authorities on natural medicine, and is a sought-after lecturer and educator. Visit him online at doctormurray.com.

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