

## Anxiety...

An emotional state ranging from mild unease to intense fear, often characterized by a sense of impending doom. Physical symptoms can include palpitations, throbbing or stabbing pains, breathing difficulties, headaches, neck and back pain, restless trembling hands, fatigue, diarrhea, upset stomach, and depression.

### Treatment.

Long-term anxiety is psychologically draining and can compromise the immune system, making you more susceptible to infection and disease. Counselling or psychotherapy can greatly assist in getting to the root of the cause of your anxiety. A simple chat with your doctor or health practitioner can also help. The following treatments help resolve short-term anxiety.

### Dietary

Avoid caffeine (coffee, chocolate, cola, tea). A deficiency in vitamin B complex can increase symptoms of stress. To ensure adequate intake, a vitamin B complex supplement should be taken once daily.

### Aromatherapy

Essential oil lavender has been shown in studies to relieve anxiety: a few drops can be used in steam inhalations, a bath or simply sprinkle 2 drops on a tissue or handkerchief and inhale it from time to time. Regular treatment from a professional is extremely relaxing. For severe anxiety add one drop of valerian oil to a steam inhalation or bath.

### Herbal

Valerian is one of the most useful herbs taken to reduce tension and anxiety. Pour a cup of boiling water over 1-2 teaspoons of the root and let it infuse for 15 minutes. Drink when needed.

### Chinese Medicine

Traditional doctors see anxiety as a weakness of energy in the liver and spleen. They recommend Chinese angelica and ginseng.

### Bach Flower Remedies

Aspen or Rescue Remedy are useful.

### Massage

Stress and anxiety produce rigid and painful muscles, particularly in the neck and shoulders. A regular massage from a therapist, friend or partner relaxes these muscles, and in turn relieves anxiety. The best way to carry out a quick neck and shoulder massage is for you to kneel with your arms and head supported on a chair or table. Your partner should firmly squeeze and stroke the muscles of shoulders and neck either side of the spine working upwards and outwards.

### Relaxation

Attending a yoga or meditation class will help improve or prevent anxiety. The following relaxation routine should be carried out at least once a day:

Lie on a firm surface, close your eyes and become aware of how your body feels. Focus your attention on each part of your body, starting with the tips of the toes, and finishing with your face and eyes; consciously try to relax every part of your body in turn. The whole procedure should take at least 10 minutes. Anxiety is often caused by hyperventilation, and

can be helped by yogic breathing: kneel on the floor, place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Inhale for about two seconds, allowing your stomach to bulge out, then slowly exhale for about 4-8 seconds, feeling your stomach deflate. Then place your hand on your chest and repeat the procedure allowing your chest to bulge and deflate. Repeat this pattern for several minutes. Biofeedback can help you learn to relax if you have difficulties.

#### Orthodox

Tranquillizers, such as Valium, are often prescribed, though long-term use can lead to over-reliance and serious side effects. Counselling is sometimes recommended.