Nutrition and Anxiety

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

3 Nutrition Tips for Combating Anxiety

Your stomach has a mind of its own. Literally. The enteric nervous system is the digestive system's response network. It causes the stomach to react to anxiety by slowing down or speeding up the digestive process. Various uncomfortable symptoms can result, such as nausea and heartburn. What you put in your stomach can have the reverse effect. Scientists know more and more about which foods set off anxiety triggers and which substances in food make it difficult to relax. With nutrition and anxiety in mind, here are three tips on how to use nutrition therapy to stay healthy and stress-free.

Regulate Your Caffeine Intake

Caffeine is one of those stimulants that is hard to give up. Caffeine has gone through a lot of ups and downs in its reputation as a daily habit for many Americans. For a long time, it was simply seen as bad for you. Now it appears that it can improve athletic performance and may not be as bad for you as it once was thought to be. However, like all stimulants, caffeine must be used in moderation, or not at all.

One of our favorite bloggers wrote about how she couldn't get rid of her insomnia. She tried everything. She regulated her diet carefully. Then, one night, before she turned off the light, she reached for the super-sized caffeinated soda on the night table. She suddenly realized what she was doing. She stopped drinking caffeine at bedtime, and her sleeping habits improved. Timing means a lot with caffeine. Avoid energy drinks and supplements containing caffeine or other stimulants. Even energizing natural herbs can produce anxiety, especially if taken in high doses. Read the caution label on the bottle. Some people are more sensitive to the ingredients than others. If you are feeling anxious, be especially aware of your stimulant intake.

Drink Plenty of Water

Dehydration produces anxiety. The body signals its need to find a water source. Water is vital to all body functions, including digestion. Even mild dehydration produces mood changes. Many people are dehydrated. This is especially true in winter when heated houses and offices are typically drier than the Sahara Desert. You have to compensate for breathing such dry air. Drink more water, especially when you are feeling anxious.

Eat a Balanced Diet

The same healthy diet that balances your body's functions and keeps you strong also works to relieve your anxiety. Eat plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. Eat protein, especially at breakfast. The protein will help your body regulate blood sugar and keep you energized throughout the day. Your mood will stay more in balance as a result.

Avoid simple sugars. They spike the blood sugar count and can produce "jitters" in sensitive people. Eat complex carbohydrates, which increase the body's production of serotonin. Serotonin has a calming effect on the nerves.

Serotonin is available in supplements, but it is readily available in a good diet as well. Eating carbohydrates at the end of the day can improve sleep. Timing, again, is everything. Eating something right before you go to bed can produce insomnia, as the stomach stays "awake" digesting your food.

Omega-3 fatty acids have many health benefits. Nutritionists recommend including salmon and other fish high in Omega-3s in a healthy diet several times a week. Omega-3 oils may also lower anxiety levels. Omega-3 supplements are widely available.

Anxiety responds to nutrition therapy. By avoiding anxiety-producing substances, you can do a lot to improve your peace of mind. By eating well, you can keep your body functioning in a balanced and stress-free way. Your anxiety level is naturally lowered.