

TAKING THE ANGST OUT OF ANXIETY

Dr. Shawna Eischens

Have you experienced unrealistic or excessive worry about events, objects, or situations? How about a recurrent thought, idea, or feeling that seems to affect your daily life in an undesirable way? Anxiety is when worry or fear interfere with normal functioning and may also be exhibited in a variety of physical ways including increased heart rate, gastrointestinal distress, insomnia, muscle tightness, perspiration, nausea, etc.

If the above scenarios sound familiar, you are likely part of the 18% of people in the U.S who have been diagnosed with the most common mental illness in the U.S. Although anxiety can be debilitating for many, nearly everyone has experienced mild forms of anxiety such as not sleeping well before a big event or having an upset stomach thinking about an unpleasant situation. Unfortunately we see an increasing trend in our practice of children with anxiety as well as adults. It is important to address anxiety before it becomes deeper and becomes a precursor to other issues.

A study commissioned by ADAA (Anxiety and Depression Association of America) found that anxiety disorders cost the U.S more than \$42 billion a year, almost one-third of the country's total mental health bill. Since anxiety may mimic physical illness, repeat health care services are often accrued before the person finds answers or relief.

It is important for the physicians at Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic to find the cause of your anxiety as opposed to just medicating symptoms. Anxiety is no different than other conditions in that it varies from person to person and depends on genetics, brain chemistry, multiple lifestyle factors, personality, and life events. Our goal is to help you heal. Here are some options to help decrease anxiety:

- Breathe, just breathe. Relax your jaw and shoulders, inhale to a count of four while your abdomen expands. Hold for a count of one, then exhale to a count of four bringing your abdomen towards yours spine. Hold for one second and repeat. In for 4, pause, out for 4, pause.
- Accept what is. Letting go of the word “should” and accepting what is can be liberating for some. If this idea brings more fear than peace, how does it feel to simply observe your thoughts and actions without any judgment or criticism? Give the judge a day off. Or at least a few hours at least?☺
- Decrease alcohol, sugar, and caffeine consumption. Alcohol depletes B vitamins, affects sleep quality, and can promote depression and anxiety. Sugar and caffeine can mimic signs of anxiety including increased heart rate and a nervous or jittery feeling.
- Address the cause. This can be a difficult one for people in certain situations such as children living in undesirable circumstances, caretakers, or sole providers with job related anxiety. Life happens and not all circumstances can be avoided, yet

evaluating over-booked schedules, toxic relationships, or other anxiety promoters is important to decrease your overall anxiety.

- Acupuncture can help balance and calm. Even one or two needles placed appropriately by a professional can promote a nearly instantaneous relaxing effect.
- Work it out! Exercise it out in a cardio kickboxing or yoga class. Talk it out with a therapist or mental health practitioner. Neuro-emotional technique and hypnotherapy can be very beneficial to decrease and overcome anxiety.
- Give the body what it needs. A deficiency in progesterone, magnesium, serotonin, vitamin B, or GABA can cause symptoms including anxiety, therefore, if a person is balanced with proper levels of the indicated deficiency, anxiety will likely decrease as well.
- Consult with a naturopathic physician or homeopathic prescriber. The safest, most effective, and fastest acting medicine I have seen in practice is homeopathy. It doesn't have altering effects like many traditional anti-anxiety medications, but rather balances and helps the patient feel like they are equipped with a 'marshmallow suit'. Things that may normally consume or upset people bounce off easier and don't cause the previous symptoms of anxiety. A patient who had significant trauma described homeopathy as the missing puzzle piece to her previous years of therapy to overcome her debilitating fear.

Although there are many supplements or medications that may help decrease anxiety, they come with a price. Not only can medications like Xanax/alprazolam be extremely addictive and hard to wean, patients often do not feel like themselves while medicated. Supplements like kava, lavender, L-theanine, passionflower, and valerian may help calm, but are not usually indicated for long term use and do not address the root cause of anxiety.

Have hope; it doesn't have to be an uphill battle. Invest in your health with the physicians at Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic. We are here and happy to help you heal. www.rockwoodnaturalmedicine.com 480-767-7119