



What is Anxiety?

Everyone has felt a little anxious at some time point in their lives. In fact, some degree of anxiety is perfectly normal! Both **children and adults may suffer from routine anxiety** which is often brought on by physical situations. These situations can range from the first day of school to job interviews, flying on an airplane or common anxiety felt on your wedding day.

There are many different types of **anxiety disorders**, including [Generalized Anxiety Disorder \(GAD\)](#), [Panic Disorders](#), [Phobias](#), [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder - OCD in Adults](#) and [OCD in Children](#), [Stress Disorders like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#) and Anxiety Disorders due to known physical causes.

Diagnosing Anxiety

There are no laboratory tests that can diagnose **anxiety disorders**, although some specific tests may be performed by a health care professional to rule out disease or serious illness. It is very **difficult to diagnosis anxiety as it involves a wide variety of symptoms** that often differ from person to person.

A person may display physical signs of anxiety – such as profuse sweating, or they may appear completely normal. A personal history may be reviewed and tests may be run to rule out the following factors that may be causing the symptoms of anxiety:

- Physical disorders (e.g. thyroid problems)
- Diet
- Prescription drugs
- Alcohol abuse
- Mood-altering drugs
- Caffeine consumption in large amounts
- Work environment (overly noisy or dangerous)

In most cases, the most important information is the patient's psychological and social history. Anyone with chronic anxiety for no apparent reason should see a healthcare professional.

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

Signs of Anxiety Disorder

Signs of anxiety disorders include:

- Endless checking or rechecking actions
- A constant and unrealistic worry about everyday occurrences and activities
- Fear and anxiety that appear for no apparent reason

These symptoms must be severe enough to seriously affect social and occupational functioning to a significant degree.

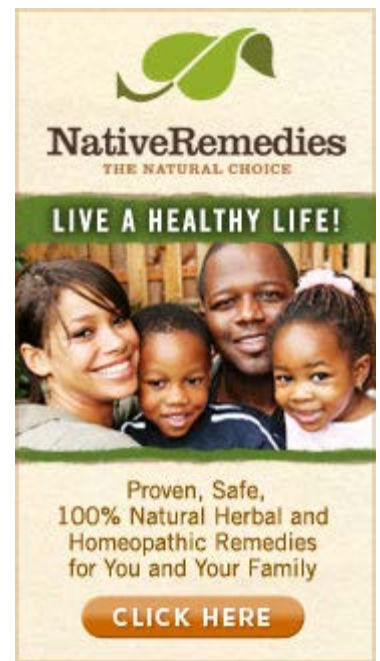
Below is a short overview of anxiety disorders and their related symptoms. For more detailed information on these anxiety disorders, click on the links provided.

Panic Disorder

The main characteristic of panic disorder is the occurrence of panic attacks along with fear of them happening again. People suffering from panic disorder may also experience symptoms of agoraphobia (fear of public places) or situations in which they might have a panic attack and be unable to leave or to find help. This can create a cycle of anxiety and apprehension with the impending fear of the anxiety bringing on a panic attack, and so forth. About 25% of patients with panic disorder develop obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Symptoms of panic disorder include:

- A sudden, uncontrollable attack of terror
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- The feeling of being out of control or a terribly frightening feeling, with a strong desire to flee or avoid the situation altogether

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)



Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

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GAD is the most commonly diagnosed anxiety disorder and occurs most frequently in young adults. People with this anxiety disorder find themselves worrying excessively for a period of at least six months accompanied by three or more of the following physical symptoms (only one of the following symptoms is needed in children to diagnose GAD):

get you an answer within 24 hours.

- Headaches
- Trembling, twitching
- Lightheadedness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Nausea
- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating, hot flashes
- Change in appetite
- Frequent need to use bathroom
- Easily startled
- Lump in throat, difficulty swallowing
- Sleeplessness
- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
- Irritability



Social Phobia

If you've ever been described as "painfully shy," you know it's no exaggeration! Extreme shyness (also known as social anxiety disorder or social phobia) can be agonizing. It keeps you from living a normal life, trying new things, making friends and having healthy self-esteem.

People with this anxiety disorder have a deep rooted fear of situations in which they may be exposed to possible scrutiny of others. It involves a fear of being humiliated or judged. It can appear as a fear of performing certain functions in the presence of others, such as public speaking, eating in public or using public lavatories. About 3.7% of the U.S. population ages 18 to 54 - approximately 5.3 million Americans – will suffer from social phobia in any given year! Social phobia occurs in women twice as often as in men, although a higher proportion of men seek help for this disorder. The disorder typically begins in adolescence and rarely develops after age 25. Social phobia can be debilitating. Many people with this illness have a hard time making and keeping friends.

Symptoms can include:

- Canceling social events at the last minute
- Fearing new activities
- Avoiding contact and interaction with others
- Becoming easily embarrassed
- Frequently feeling down or lonely
- Using alcohol or drugs to help relax in social situations
- Worrying for days or weeks about an upcoming social event
- Fearing others may be judgmental
- Feeling self-conscious in everyday situations

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- Having an extreme fear of being in an embarrassing situation
- Going to great lengths to avoid social situations

While almost everyone finds some social situation uncomfortable, those suffering with social phobia, may avoid social situations completely. Some people feel extreme shyness in certain situations, but not in others.

These situations may include:

- Public speaking
- Meeting new people, especially members of the opposite sex and authority figures
- Making phone calls
- Eating or drinking in front of others

Physical symptoms often accompany the intense anxiety of social phobia and may include:

- Blushing
- Profuse sweating
- Trembling
- Nausea
- Difficulty talking

Other Phobias:

Other phobias concern activities or situations (e.g. fear of flying), while many are focused on harmless animals or other objects. Some of the more common specific phobias focus on small enclosed places, heights, escalators, tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, dogs, and injuries involving blood. Phobias are more than just extreme fear - they are irrational fear of a particular thing or situation. You may feel fine flying in airplanes but be unable to go above the 5th floor of an office building. While adults with phobias realize that these fears are irrational, they often find that facing, or even thinking about facing, the feared object or situation brings on a panic attack or severe anxiety.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

People suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder are constantly occupied with intrusive and unwanted thoughts – often, although not always, accompanied with un-controlled ritualized behavior that eases the anxiety. This affects between 2-3% of the population and is much more common than was previously thought. OCD affects males and females equally. The symptoms of OCD, which are the obsessions and compulsions, may vary.

Common obsessions include:

- Fear of dirt or contamination by germs
- Fear of causing harm to another
- Fear of making a mistake



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Fear of being embarrassed or behaving in a socially unacceptable manner

- Fear of thinking evil or sinful thoughts
- Need for order, excessive neatness or exactness
- Excessive doubt and the need for constant reassurance

Common compulsions include:

- Repeatedly bathing, showering or washing hands
- Refusing to shake hands or touch doorknobs
- Repeatedly checking things, such as locks or stoves
- Constant counting, mentally or aloud, while performing routine tasks
- Constantly arranging things in a certain way
- Eating foods in a specific order
- Being stuck on words, images or thoughts, usually disturbing, that won't go away and can interfere with sleep
- Repeating specific words, phrases or prayers
- Needing to perform tasks a certain number of times
- Collecting or hoarding items with no apparent value

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This disorder can arise as a result of a severely distressing or traumatic event. Signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder typically appear within three months of the traumatic event. However, in some instances, they may not occur until years after the event and may include:

- Flashbacks and distressing dreams associated with the traumatic event
- Distress at anniversaries of the trauma
- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings and activities associated with the trauma
- Feelings of detachment or from others and an inability to have loving feelings
- Markedly diminished interest or participation in activities that once were an important source of satisfaction
- Hopelessness about the future — no hope of a family life, career or living

- Physical and psychological hypersensitivity (after the trauma) with at least two of the following reactions: trouble sleeping, anger, difficulty concentrating, exaggerated startle response to noise, and physiological reaction to situations that remind you of the traumatic event. These physiological reactions may include an increase in blood pressure, a rapid heart rate, rapid breathing, muscle tension, nausea and diarrhea.

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What Causes Anxiety?

The human body is **programmed to sense and respond to danger and threats**. When presented with a new situation, the brain searches for a stored memory of the event – so that it can reference how it should react.

If you have not experienced the situation before, and you have no stored memory for it, you are suddenly faced with the *unknown* and your body reacts chemically, by changing to what is known as flight or fight mode.

This is when a person most often experiences physical symptoms like a racing heart, sweaty palms and a dry mouth. There is often a change in breathing as well as a desire to **run away or avoid the situation somehow**.

If you have a stored memory for the event – and it was a negative memory (such as being bitten by a snake for example) then, upon entering a snake park, your brain will reference this memory and react accordingly, producing the physical signs of anxiety.

These **physical symptoms are the body's healthy response** to a feared event, object or situation. They are caused by an increase in stress hormones which prepare the body physically to deal with a dangerous situation – to either escape it or to fight against it. The stress hormones (e.g. adrenalin) increase the heart rate to provide more oxygen to the muscles and the brain and cause breathing to become faster to get the oxygen into the lungs.

When there is an actual dangerous situation, these symptoms are adaptive and can mean the difference between life and death! The problem arises when this *flight or fight* reaction of the body takes place when there is no actual danger – or when it is out of proportion to the actual situation that is occurring.

It is important to remember that **fear and anxiety are not the same**.

Fear is a direct, focused response to a specific event or object, and the person is consciously aware of it. Most people will feel fear if someone points a loaded gun at them or if they see a tornado forming on the horizon. They also will recognize that they are afraid.

Anxiety, on the other hand, is often unfocused, vague, and hard to pin down to a specific cause. This may be because the anxious individual is not consciously aware of the original source of the feeling. In this form it is called free-floating anxiety. An individual observing the anxious person from the outside may be truly puzzled as to the reason for the person's anxiety. Anxiety is difficult to describe concretely because it has so many different potential causes and degrees of intensity.

It is also important to distinguish between anxiety as a feeling or experience, and an anxiety disorder as a diagnosed condition. A person

may feel anxious without having an anxiety disorder. Similarly, a person facing a clear and present danger or a realistic fear is not usually considered to be in a state of anxiety.

Other Factors Associated with Anxiety

Learned Associations vs Inherited Conditions

Anxiety disorders often run in families possibly indicating that children may learn unhealthy attitudes and behaviors from parents, as well as healthy ones. Also, recurrent disorders in families **may indicate that there is a genetic or inherited factor in some anxiety disorders.**

For example, identical twins have a higher rate of panic disorders than in fraternal (non-identical) twins. A review of the available studies on Anxiety Disorders suggests that a combination of environmental (learned) and inherited (genetic) factors exist in the manifestation of Anxiety Disorders. This makes some people more susceptible to developing an Anxiety Disorder than others – and environmental triggers (e.g. stress) can therefore more easily result in anxiety symptoms.

Medications and Substance Use

Anxiety symptoms may occur as a side effect of certain medications. These include birth control pills; some thyroid or asthma drugs; some psychotropic agents; occasionally, local anesthetics; corticosteroids; antihypertensive drugs; and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Although people do not usually think of caffeine as a drug, it can cause anxiety-like symptoms when consumed in sufficient quantity. Patients who consume caffeine rich foods and beverages, (such as chocolate, cocoa, coffee, tea, or carbonated soft drinks - especially cola beverages) can sometimes lower their anxiety symptoms by simply reducing their intake of these substances.

Withdrawal from certain prescription drugs, primarily beta blockers and corticosteroids, as well as withdrawal from drugs of abuse, including LSD, cocaine, alcohol, and opiates, can also cause anxiety. Many people who try to stop benzodiazepines (originally prescribed for anxiety) begin to experience anxiety symptoms when they stop their medication. This is often interpreted as meaning that they 'need' the medication rather than as the withdrawal process from the drug itself.

Disease and Illness

Anxiety often occurs as a symptom in other medical conditions. Some of these diseases are disorders of the endocrine system, (such as Cushing's

syndrome) and include over- or under activity of the thyroid gland. Other medical conditions that can produce anxiety include respiratory distress syndrome, mitral valve disorders and chest pain caused by inadequate blood supply to the heart. Certain symptoms (e.g. vertigo) may even be caused by problems in the balance center of the inner ear. Anxiety may also be a symptom of other psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia.

When anxiety symptoms accompany the diagnosis of another disorder, then treatment usually focuses on the primary diagnosis rather than the anxiety itself – which is why it is important that a proper differential diagnosis be done. It makes no sense, for example, to treat anxiety caused by an overactive thyroid. While some minor relief may be experienced, the underlying cause remains untreated – meaning the problem will not resolve.

Social and Environmental Stress

People frequently report feelings of high anxiety when they anticipate and fear the loss of social approval or love. Another social stressor is prejudice. **People who belong to groups that are targets of bias are at higher risk for developing anxiety disorders.** Some experts believe, for example, that the higher rates of phobias and panic disorders among women, reflects their greater social and economic vulnerability.

Some controversial studies indicate that the increase in violent or upsetting pictures and stories in news reports and entertainment may raise the anxiety level of many people. Stress and anxiety management programs often suggest that patients cut down their exposure to upsetting people, programs and events. This may be particularly relevant in the case of young children who develop problems with anxiety.

Anxiety may also be caused by environmental or occupational factors. People who must live or work around sudden or loud noises, bright or flashing lights, chemical vapors, or similar nuisances, which they cannot avoid or control, may develop heightened anxiety levels. This is because the stimuli they receive from their environment (e.g. loud noises) can put their system into a state of constant alert.

Help for Anxiety

Not all patients with anxiety require treatment, but for more severe cases, treatment is recommended. The important thing to remember is that **anxiety disorders do respond to treatment** and therefore everyone can be helped.

There are several reasons why it is important for patients with severe anxiety symptoms to get help. **Anxiety doesn't always go away by**

itself! It often progresses and if left untreated, anxiety disorders may eventually lead to a diagnosis of major depression, or interfere with the patient's education or ability to keep a job.

In addition, **many anxious patients develop addictions to drugs or alcohol** when they try to medicate their symptoms. Moreover, since children learn ways of coping with anxiety from their parents, adults who get help for anxiety disorders are in a better position to help their families cope with factors that lead to anxiety than those who remain untreated.

Because **anxiety often has more than one cause** and is experienced in highly individual ways, its treatment usually requires more than one type of therapy. In addition, there is no way to tell in advance how patients will respond to a specific medication, remedy or therapy.

Sometimes health care professionals will need to try different methods of treatment before finding the best combination for the particular patient. It usually takes about six to eight weeks to evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment regimen.

Psychological Treatments for Anxiety

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Environmental Treatments for Anxiety

- **Avoidance or minimization of stimulants.** No caffeine, minimize use of asthma medications if possible (bronchodilators, theophylline), avoid use of nasal decongestants, some cough medications, and diet pills
- **Avoid or decrease alcohol consumption.** While alcohol can help to relax you, it increases anxiety levels when it wears off.
- **Good sleep habits.** Getting adequate, restful sleep improves response to interventions to treat anxiety disorders. Many people with anxiety disorders who cultivate good sleep habits find that their symptoms diminish significantly.
- **Reduction of stressors.** Identify and remove or reduce stressful tasks or situations at home, school and work
- **Regular exercise** helps tremendously with stress and anxiety management and also increases the body's production of 'feelgood' hormones, while reducing stress hormones such as adrenalin.

Alternative Treatments (Natural) for Anxiety

- In today's modern world, daily stresses and a fast-paced lifestyle can take its toll. Alternative treatments offer a natural alternative to prescription drugs (that often have serious side effects and that may prove very costly). **Natural remedies for anxiety** can include a variety of approaches.

Natural remedies for anxiety often provide the public with services not available from conventional medicine such as:

- Patient empowerment
- Alternative methods of pain management
- Treatment methods that support the systemic model of health
- Stress reduction services
- Other preventive health services that are not typically a part of conventional medicine

In alternative medicine, a holistic approach to healing recognizes that the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical elements of each person comprise a system that is greater than its individual parts. This approach attempts to treat the whole person, concentrating on the cause of the illness as well as symptoms.

Examples of such holistic therapies include Acupuncture, Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, Homeopathy, Indian Head Massage, Naturopathic medicine, Qi Gong, Reiki, and Reflexology. They usually do not originate from the western allopathic medical-scientific tradition.

Holistic Living may be defined as simple, spiritual, purposeful,

peaceful and productive living with moderation in food intake, adequate exercise and positive thinking and attitude to life. Holistic Living is an art of living in harmony with nature and concern to the whole universe - using all that nature has to offer as a natural medicine chest!

Rather than treating problems in isolation, Naturopaths prefer to take a holistic look at the individual and encompass a variety of factors to include diet, lifestyle, personality type, surroundings and emotional elements – thereby supporting the health of the individual as a whole.

Natural remedies have been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years to support the healthy functioning of the body, helping to encourage normal and efficient functioning of all the body systems. In more recent times, research has confirmed this traditional wisdom. **Natural remedies for anxiety** can include herbs such as St John's Wort. Clinical studies have demonstrated that this herb can be just as effective as prescription drugs, without the side effects.

Most conventional doctors are not trained in the use of alternative medicine and therefore do not encourage their patients to give it a trial. This means that the only option for the patient remains drug therapy. However, some conventional doctors, recognising the benefits to their patients, have begun to inform themselves about natural remedies and many are now helping their patients to seek alternatives to the prescription drugs.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a branch of naturopathy that originated in the East and has a long and esteemed history. Anxiety is seen as a symptom of a systemic disorder and Chinese medicine regards anxiety as a blockage of qi, or vital force, inside the patient's body. The practitioner of Chinese medicine chooses acupuncture point locations and/or herbal therapy to move the qi and rebalance the entire system in relation to the lung and large intestine.

Although malpractices on the part of some unscrupulous individuals has resulted in Chinese medicine falling into disrepute in some quarters, it is important to note that this ancient system of medicine has a long and reputable history and can be very helpful when correctly applied. Make sure that you buy Chinese medicinal herbs from reputable sources and companies and you should have no problems.

Homeopathic practitioners select a remedy based on other associated symptoms and the patient's general constitution and personality type. Homeopathy is a medical approach which operates on the principle of 'Like treats Like', using minute amounts of certain substances, prepared in a very unique way, to stimulate the body's own healing forces.

Homeopathy can be very helpful in the treatment of anxiety disorders. Because the medicines used in homeopathy are present in such small quantities and because of the special methods of manufacturing these medications, side effects are almost unheard of and there is no risk of dependency.

Herbalists may use medicinal herbs from a range of countries, drawing on the natural medicine knowledge of indigenous people from India (Ayurvedic medicine), America, Africa, Australia and Europe. Many of these remedies come with thousands of years of traditional use. Once again, it is always important to source natural remedies from reputable companies who also offer backup and support to their customers.

Other holistic interventions may often be useful along with either conventional drugs or natural remedies. For example, meditation and mindfulness training have been found to be beneficial to individuals with phobias and panic disorder. Hydrotherapy is useful to some anxious patients because it promotes general relaxation of the nervous system. Yoga, aikido, t'ai chi, and dance therapy help people work with the physical, as well as the emotional, tensions that either promote anxiety or are created by the anxiety.

Learning to Manage Anxiety

Talking with friends or someone from your religious or spiritual community also can help, although this is not a substitute for mental health care. The family is very important in the recovery of an anxiety disorder. Families should be supportive. If family members tend to trivialize the disorder or demand improvement without treatment, individuals suffering from anxiety and the related disorders may experience worse **anxiety attack symptoms**.

Managing stress and practicing meditation may help calm you and enhance treatment. Early research says heart-pumping exercise such as brisk walking or running may help. Caffeine, illegal drugs and even some over-the-counter cold medications can worsen an anxiety disorder.

Recovery

Recovery depends on a number of factors such as:

- The specific disorder
- The severity of **anxiety attack symptoms**
- The specific causes of the anxiety
- The person's degree of control over these causes
- The patient's age, sex, general health, living situation, belief system, social support network, and responses to different medications and

forms of therapy

Remember! According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, 90 percent of people with emotional illnesses will improve or recover if they get adequate treatment.

How to Avoid Feeling Anxious

A number of techniques may help manage **anxiety attack symptoms**, such as:

- Relaxation techniques (meditation, listening to soothing music or having a hot aromatherapy foam bath)
- Breathing exercises
- Distraction (putting the anxiety out of one's mind by focusing thoughts on something else)

As humans, we have significant control over thoughts, and therefore, we can try to re-program our minds and learn ways of preventing anxiety by changing irrational ideas and beliefs.

Self-Help Tips

- Picture yourself confronting your fears. Figure out what scares you and learn to respond differently.
- Change your attitude. Remind yourself that you are in control.
- Learn calming techniques.
- Practice. Place yourself in smaller, more manageable social situations.
- Tell people that you're nervous. This can help put you and others at ease.
- Read as much as you can about anxiety and ways of helping yourself. There are many excellent books written by professionals containing a wealth of information that can help you. Knowledge is power!

More Information on Anxiety

Different Types of Anxiety Disorders

There are many types of anxiety disorders in the adult population. They can be sorted under the following headings:

- Panic Disorders
- Phobias (and social phobia)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Stress disorders, e.g. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Anxiety disorders due to known physical causes (general medical conditions or substance abuse)

Supporting an Anxious Family Member

Family support is important to the recovery process. Like any other illness, anxiety disorders can take a toll on the family and friends of the sufferer.

Sufferers of anxiety disorders and their families may spend months, even years, without knowing what is wrong or how they can help the family member suffering from anxiety.

Household routines are disrupted, sometimes special plans or allowances need to be made, and the person with the disorder may be reluctant to participate in typical social activities. This can be very frustrating and can put an enormous amount of strain on relationships.

These factors can all have a negative impact on family dynamics. Family members should learn as much as they can about the disorder, which will help them know what to expect from the illness and from the sometimes long recovery process.

Family members should also learn when to be patient with the sufferer and when to push or encourage them to do things that they may be avoiding due to the anxiety.

Family members often want to help the sufferer, but do not know how. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

- Anxiety disorders are real, serious, but treatable medical conditions
- Having one is not a sign of weakness or lack of moral character
- There is reliable evidence linking Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and other anxiety disorders to brain chemistry
- Life events can trigger the onset of an anxiety disorder in a person who is genetically predisposed

Some things family members can do to help a loved one diagnosed with an anxiety disorder are:

- Learn about the disorder
- Recognize and praise small accomplishments
- Modify expectations during stressful periods
- Measure progress on the basis of individual improvement, not against some absolute standard
- Be flexible and try to maintain a normal routine

It is also important for family members to keep in mind that the recovery process is stressful for them too. They should build a support network of relatives and friends for themselves. Remember that with proper treatment most anxiety disorders can be overcome!

Anxiety can also affect children. Childhood anxiety may arise for different reasons, but should never be viewed lightly. A child or teen

may not know how to put feelings of anxiety or inner turmoil into words.

They may be scared of the dark, being bullied at school or it could have a more serious origin. The root cause should be found as soon as possible and appropriate treatment implemented. **Many safe and all-natural herbal remedies can be effective in treating childhood anxiety with no side effects.**

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a

more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Products:

SAD Soother: Homeopathic remedy relieves depression related to seasonal affective disorder

PureCalm: Works quickly to facilitate a calmed mood and soothed nerves

MindSoothe: Promotes balanced mood, emotional health and feelings of well-being

Calm Tonic: Homeopathic remedy relieves the effects of stress, worry and nervous tension, plus supports nervous system health

SocialFear Relief: Homeopathic remedy relieves social fear, anxiety, nervousness, shyness and stage fright

Read the testimonials for these quality products [here!](#)

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