

# Natural Help 4...

# Anxiety



## 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](#)), and stress disorders like [post traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD).

## 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.

## Signs of Anxiety Disorder

### Signs of anxiety disorders include:

- Endless checking or rechecking actions

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- A constant and unrealistic worry about everyday occurrences and activities
- Fear and [anxiety](#) 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)**

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):

- 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

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### **Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist**



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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.

## 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
- 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

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## 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 uncontrolled, 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
- 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



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- 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, an exaggerated, startled response to noise, and/or a physiological reaction to situations reminiscent of the traumatic event. These physiological reactions may include an increase in blood pressure, a rapid heart rate or breathing, muscle tension, nausea and diarrhea.

## 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 occurs 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), 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, conscious response to a specific event or object**. 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-

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floating [anxiety](#). An individual observing the anxious person from the outside may be truly puzzled as to the reason for the person's reaction. [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](#).



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## 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**, including birth control pills, some thyroid or asthma drugs, some psychotropic agents, 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 of 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 itself.

## 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 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 alertness.

## 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 well to treatment.**

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 an individual'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

By contacting a psychologist, those who suffer from an [anxiety disorder](#) can take the first step on the road to recovery. Different psychologists use various approaches to the treatment of [anxiety](#), and it may take some time before identifying the most appropriate treatment(s) for the individual.

- **Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT):** Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) helps in changing the behaviors and thought processes of people with [anxiety disorders](#). The cognitive part of CBT involves changing the thinking patterns that keep the person from overcoming the fear. Someone with a panic disorder can learn to understand that they are not having a heart attack when they are having heart palpitations. **People are taught to identify the thoughts and situations that stimulate their [anxiety](#),** and to view them more realistically. Over time, the individual is **helped to change maladaptive thought patterns** which contribute to the feelings of [anxiety](#). The behavioral part is meant to change the person's behavior by exposing that person to very thing they fear in manageable, gradual stages until they are desensitized to it. For instance, someone with obsessive compulsive disorder with a fear of germs may be encouraged by a therapist to go a certain amount of time without washing. Doing this repeatedly along with counseling from the therapist eventually helps decrease the [anxiety](#). Sometimes behavioral therapy is used without the component of cognitive therapy. This involves exposing the person to the object or situation that is feared. For these approaches to work, the patient must be ready (a therapist can help them decide if they are).
- **Psychotherapy:** Most people with [anxiety disorders](#) will be given some form of psychotherapy, sometimes accompanied by medication. Many people benefit from insight-oriented therapies, which are designed to **help them uncover unconscious battles** in order to understand how their symptoms developed in the first place. People who are extremely anxious may benefit from supportive psychotherapy, which aims at reducing the symptoms. It centers on the developmental aspects of [anxiety disorders](#) solely through talk therapy.
- **Behavioral therapies:** Behavioral therapies focus on using techniques such as guided imagery, relaxation training, progressive desensitization or flooding as means to reduce [anxiety](#) responses or eliminate specific phobias.
- **Relaxation training, sometimes called [anxiety management training](#),** includes breathing exercises and similar techniques intended to

help the patient prevent hyperventilation and relieve the muscle tension associated with the fight-or-flight reaction. The person may also be given a CD to continue the relaxation training at home. Both CBT and relaxation training can be used in group therapy as well as individual treatment. In addition to CBT, support groups are often helpful to anxious patients, because they provide a social network and lessen the embarrassment that often accompanies [anxiety](#) symptoms.

- **Psychopharmacological treatments:** Medications are often prescribed to relieve the physical and psychological symptoms of [anxiety](#). Most drugs work by counteracting the biochemical and muscular changes involved in the fight-or-flight reaction. Some work directly on the chemicals in the brain that are thought to underlie the [anxiety](#).
- **Benzodiazepines:** (e.g. Klonopin, Ativan, Valium, Librium, Serax) can help to reduce the symptoms of an [anxiety disorder](#). However, if used long term, dependency may develop along with tolerance to the drug. With some benzodiazepines, dependency can develop very quickly – even after two or three weeks of use. Because of the development of tolerance to the drug, dosage might have to be increased over time in order to achieve the same effect. Once the person has become dependent on benzodiazepines, it can be difficult for them to stop taking it due to severe withdrawal symptoms. Benzodiazepine dependency is a major problem in the Western world, and the use of benzodiazepines for more than a week or two should be considered as a last resort only after all other interventions have failed. Remember that these drugs also increase the effects of alcohol and the two should never be taken in combination.
- **Serotonergic agents:** Newer antidepressants act as anti-[anxiety](#) agents as well. Unlike benzodiazepines which are faster acting, these drugs can take 4 to 6 weeks for full response. Examples are Luvox, Prozac, Zoloft and Paxil. Although manufacturers claim that they are not dependency-forming, withdrawal symptoms when discontinuing these medications are widely reported, along with other side effects like weight gain and loss of libido.
- **Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs):** These are older antidepressants with more side effects typically than the serotonergic agents. They may also take 4 to 6 weeks for full response. Examples include Tofranil, Elavil, Pamelor and Sinequan.
- **Combination serotonin/norepinephrine agents:** These include medications such as Effexor, Serzone, and Remeron. Response time is also 4 to 6 weeks.
- **Antihistamines:** Antihistamines, usually prescribed for allergies, were also used for mild to moderate [anxiety](#) for many years. These, like the benzodiazepines, work fairly quickly (Atarax, Vistaril), but may also cause drowsiness and other side effects.
- **Buspirone (BuSpar):** A new serotonergic combination agonist/antagonist. This medication claims to be non-addicting, but may take 2 to 4 weeks for full effect.
- **Major tranquilizers (also called neuroleptics):** These are medications that act on a variety of neurotransmitter systems (acetylcholine, dopamine, histamine, adrenergic). Most are somewhat sedating, and have been used in situations where [anxiety](#) is severe enough to cause disorganization of thoughts and abnormal physical and mental sensations, such as the sense that things around you aren't real or that you are disconnected with your body (derealization). Commonly used neuroleptics include: Zyprexa, Risperdal, Seroquel, Mellaril, Thorazine, Stelazine, Mogan, Navane, Prolixin, and Haldol.

## Other medications

If you have been diagnosed with an [anxiety disorder](#), your healthcare professional may give you a beta-blocker for going into a situation where an attack may happen. The beta-blocker can keep your heart from pounding, your hands from shaking and other physical symptoms from developing.

### Before taking medication for an [anxiety disorder](#):

- Ask your healthcare professional to tell you about the effects and side effects, as well as the risk of dependency. Do not allow yourself to be brushed off with simple reassurances that there will be no problems. If you do not receive the information you need from your doctor, seek a second opinion, do your own research on the internet, or ask your pharmacist for a package insert. While drug therapy can be helpful, especially in the short term, **many people later regret that they ever started it, finding themselves dependent on their medication** as well as having to use a range of drugs to cope with the side effects that may develop.
- Tell your healthcare professional about any alternative therapies or over-the-counter medications you are using.
- Ask your healthcare professional when and how the medication will be stopped. Some drugs have to be tapered slowly under a doctor's care.

## Environmental Treatments for Anxiety

- **Avoidance or minimization of stimulants.** Do not ingest caffeine, minimize use of asthma medications if possible (bronchodilators, theophylline), and 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 'feel good' 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](#) often provide benefits 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 the 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 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-- meaning that the only option they provide for the patient remains drug therapy. However, some conventional doctors, recognizing 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 lungs 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.

**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 using 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 receive 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!

## 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 upon 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** that are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. Holistic medicine 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. 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 the benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper production lines), they have grave disadvantages, including 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 Remedies:**

**PureCalm**: Aids nervous system in stress resistance for balanced moods and feelings of well-being.

PureCalm is a 100% safe, non-addictive herbal remedy that has been specially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and children.

PureCalm can be used to safely **maintain harmony, health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system**, without harmful side effects and without sedatives. This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their supportive function in maintaining brain.

PureCalm can especially benefit those individuals needing support overcoming worry, managing stress and to promote inner calm related to certain situations. Natural stress relief products such as PureCalm can be used consistently, without side effects or compromising health.

[Learn more about PureCalm](#)

**MindSoothe**: Promote balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing.

MindSoothe is a 100% safe, non-addictive, natural herbal remedy that has been especially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and teens, and comes in a compact capsule form, making it easy to take.

MindSoothe can be used to **safely maintain emotional health, balanced mood and systemic harmony in the brain and nervous system**, without harmful side effects.

This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their calming and supportive function in maintaining brain and nervous system health, emotional balance and overall wellbeing.

[Learn more about MindSoothe](#)

**Nerve Tonic**: Promotes nervous system health, maintains balanced mood and worry free mind.

Triple Complex Nerve Tonic is a combination of three, cell-supporting tissue salts, especially selected for their effect on brain and nervous system health. This combination of tissue salts can be used regularly in a general capacity to **promote systemic balance in the brain**, spinal cord and the entire nervous system, as well as in conjunction with other remedies to maintain therapeutic effectiveness.

Tissue salts, also called cell salts or biochemic salts, are composed of **minerals that occur naturally at a cellular level in our bodies** and all organic matter on earth (plants, rocks and soil).

There have been **twelve essential tissue salts** identified as important components of all body cells and without which, true health is not possible. Each tissue salt plays a different, yet vital role in maintaining cellular health in the organs and **nervous systems** of the body.

Ensuring the healthy functioning of all brain and nervous system cells enhances the bio-availability of supplements, remedies and even nutrients in your diet. It also lessens the chance of a **nervous breakdown**. **Treating panic disorder** in people who suffer a **nervous breakdown** usually involves therapy. The doctor **treating panic disorder** will monitor the symptoms carefully to establish a treatment plan that aims to restore the health of the **nervous system**.

And, because our tissue salts are naturally occurring in the body and manufactured to ensure safe, yet optimum potency, they are safe to use for all ages, as well as during pregnancy.

[Learn more about Nerve Tonic](#)

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

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