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5 ways to REDUCE ANXIETY



Anxiety and nervous fretting about the future is a modern epidemic. But nutrition and lifestyle tweaks can help lessen the impact, says Gemma Hurditch, lecturer at the College of Naturopathic Medicine.

1 BALANCE BLOOD SUGAR

When we eat a diet that is high in refined foods, particularly refined carbohydrates such as biscuits, cakes, white flour goods and soft drinks, we can burden our blood sugar control mechanisms. The imbalance can also impact our mood – we may notice this as a feeling of being ‘hangry’ (hungry/angry) and irritated. This is because a drop in blood sugar – which occurs when our body struggles to protect itself from the effects of excessive sugar by releasing a lot of insulin – can also cause a release of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, draining our adrenal glands and making us feel on edge.

Stop the cycle by eating wholegrain, unrefined foods with healthy fats and proteins, such as legumes, fish and eggs, for a steadier supply of energy.

2 EAT MORE BRAIN FOODS

These include fish rich in omega-3 oils. People taking 2g of omega-3 daily have been found to have fewer anxiety symptoms; this could be due to the range of effects fish oils have in the body, which include anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant actions, as well as brain nourishment and restoration of good blood flow to the brain.

3 REDUCE OR ELIMINATE CAFFEINE

Caffeine increases cortisol and adrenaline to similar levels experienced during acute stress, thus it creates stress conditions in the body. People have varying sensitivity

to caffeine, and for some anxiety sufferers ditching their daily cup(s) of coffee, tea, cola and energy drinks sees a complete reversal of symptoms.

4 GET BETTER SLEEP

Being over-tired is another trigger for anxiety so prioritise a good, calming sleep routine, preferably the same every night, with no screens in the hour before bedtime and switch off equipment on standby and WiFi sources.

5 EXERCISE AND BE IN YOUR BODY

Living in the present moment is a great remedy for anxiety. Exercise brings us into the present moment and helps us to metabolise our stress hormones. Find an activity that you enjoy and can lose yourself in such as swimming, a team sport or yoga class and refresh your mind and body.



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