

## ANXIETY- EBOOKLET

Hi there,

*Thank you for ordering this Native Remedies eBooklet! eBooklets are modified from consultations with real people and cover some of the most frequently dealt with problems that are submitted to the Native Remedies site. The information contained in this eBooklet has helped many clients and I am confident that it will help you too!*

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### Understanding and Treating Anxiety

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Most people suffer from anxiety at some stage in their lives. Anxiety is usually a relatively natural response to a situation which appears threatening or to which we are not accustomed. So, for example, people are sometimes quite naturally anxious about passing tests, going for job interviews, or even speaking in public. They may experience 'butterflies' in their stomachs, sweaty palms, restlessness, insomnia, or even slight dizziness. This usually goes away after the actual event has passed or once they have become used to it. A person who is terrified of their first public speech may become so accustomed to public speaking after awhile that they don't give it a second thought!

#### 1. Diagnosis of Anxiety Disorders

When anxiety becomes so chronic or intense that it affects the person's day to day functioning and hampers performance, we will usually diagnose an Anxiety Disorder. Some people have what is called a Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This means that their anxiety does not have a specific focus like, for example, a phobia, but is more 'free floating' and forms part of their everyday functioning and response to life. Symptoms of GAD include **motor tension** (edginess, jumpiness, trembling, restlessness, twitching, muscle aches, easily startled, furrowed brow, inability to relax), **autonomic activity** (sweating, heart palpitations, dry mouth, dizziness, tingling in hands and feet, upset stomach, shortness of breath, frequent urination), **apprehensive expectation** (anxiety, fear, worry, and persistent thoughts of potential misfortune), **vigilance and scanning** (constantly on the alert for danger, failure or disaster, resulting in difficulties in concentration, irritability, impotence and insomnia). GAD is diagnosed if these symptoms have been present continuously for more than one month.

Other sufferers of anxiety are diagnosed with Panic Disorder, Phobic Disorders, or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

A Panic Disorder will be diagnosed if there are at least three panic attacks within a three-week period in reaction to situations that are not life threatening and which are not associated with physical exertion. Symptoms include shortness of breath or choking sensations, heart palpitations, chest pain, dizziness or faintness, tingling in hands or feet, hot and cold flashes, sweating, trembling, fear of dying or heart attack, and a feeling of unreality or danger. ([www.nativeremedies.com/purecalm\\_for\\_anxiety.shtml](http://www.nativeremedies.com/purecalm_for_anxiety.shtml))

Phobic Disorders are based on a persistent fear and a resultant compelling desire to avoid an object or situation to the extent that the person's life, functioning, and relationships are significantly impaired. Examples of phobic events include Social Phobia (fear of embarrassment in social situations) and Agoraphobia (fear of public places), fear of heights, flying, etc. Phobic objects may include anything from animals and insects to numbers or colors.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) may take the form of excessive and intrusive obsessive thoughts, images or impulses that are almost impossible to ignore or stop, even if the individual understands that they are senseless or unfounded. The disorder may also include repetitive and often purposeless behaviors that are often performed according to certain rules and which are sometimes believed to prevent or produce some future situation or event. The person does not find the activity pleasurable but does experience a sense of relief from tension when performing it. The obsessive thoughts, behaviors or impulses usually interfere significantly with functioning.

## 2. Causes of Anxiety Disorders

There are many different theories about the causes of anxiety disorders. Some theories say that they are genetic and are purely chemical in nature. There is some evidence for this, as anxiety disorders very often tend to run in families, even when children have been adopted at birth and never meet their biological parents. Other theorists say that extreme anxiety is learnt from an overly anxious parent or that it originates from some trauma during early childhood or from overly punitive parenting. It is very likely that there is usually a combination of these potential causes and each case must be viewed as a unique one and well investigated before any pronouncements are made about the causes.

## 3. Differential Diagnosis

When we speak about differential diagnosis, we speak about ruling out the possibility that the anxiety symptoms may be caused by something other than an Anxiety Disorder. Anybody who experiences clusters of symptoms similar to those discussed above should always have a thorough medical examination. Symptoms similar to those above may be attributable to thyroid problems, heart problems (particularly mitral valve), reactions to certain prescription or recreational drugs, and even ear infections or allergies. If these are ruled out, the likelihood is that the person is suffering from an anxiety disorder. It makes little sense to keep treating someone for anxiety when that is not the real problem, although you'd be surprised how often that actually happens!

## 4. Treatment

Different therapists treat anxiety in different ways and this depends largely on their particular training, experience, and outlook. Also some clients respond better to one form of treatment than others and it is important for the therapist to do a thorough assessment and get to know his client before deciding on treatment.

Some therapists treat their clients with prescription drugs like anxiolytics, beta blockers, or even antidepressants. This means that they are treating the symptoms of the anxiety. Anxiety symptoms or OCD can often be successfully controlled by the careful use of prescription drugs. Unfortunately many of them can be addictive or produce side effects. The person also often builds up a tolerance to them, causing them to take more and more to achieve the same effect. Another criticism is that no attention is paid to the causes of the anxiety or to helping the person learn ways of controlling or managing the anxiety without drugs.

Many therapists use techniques like progressive relaxation or meditation to help the client learn how to access their own calming response (everybody has one!) and to lower anxiety levels to more comfortable states. This is often combined with psychotherapy to help improve self-esteem and understand the causes of the anxiety, cognitive therapy to 'reprogram' the negative thoughts underlying the anxiety, or desensitization aimed at eliminating phobias.

There are also many natural products which help and may be used alone or in combination with therapy. It is usually best to speak to your pharmacist, health store owner, or health care professional to find out what is best for you and how to take it. Some common herbs for anxiety are Passiflora, Pasque Flower, St John's Wort, Melissa, Chamomile and Kava Kava. For more information go to [www.nativeremedies.com](http://www.nativeremedies.com).

It is important to note that most anxiety disorders respond well to treatment and I would encourage anyone who suffers from anxiety to seek help. It can make a huge difference in your life!

## 5. Self Help

There are many steps you can take to help relieve anxiety. If you are experiencing stress at work, in your relationships or anywhere else, look and see what changes need to be made. Get help if you feel you are unable to do this yourself.

Regular exercise is one of the most beneficial things one can do, as it has been shown to have a significant effect on lowering anxiety symptoms and improving well being. At least 45 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 times a week will make all the difference!

Make sure that you eat regularly to avoid fluctuations in blood sugar level and have at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night! Sleep deprivation can cause symptoms of anxiety.

Avoid stimulants like coffee, tea (except herbal teas), sugary foods, chocolate or carbonated drinks, particularly the cola variety. People who suffer from anxiety, who are at greater risk for dependence, should never take alcohol and most recreational drugs. These substances can also worsen the anxiety symptoms.

Include oats, bananas, avocados, pears, whole-wheat pasta, bread and brown rice in your diet.

Set aside at least 15 minutes twice a day to sit in a quiet spot, close your eyes and practice deep breathing. Listen to soothing music or a relaxation tape or CD.

If there is something specific that is causing anxiety (like shyness or fear of animals) see if you can't gradually become accustomed to it, little by little. This will also improve your confidence and self esteem.

Talk to people about how you feel! Try and socialize, start a hobby, take up a sport or develop new interests! Perhaps think about offering your services as a volunteer to help others. Anything which takes your mind off yourself and keeps you interested will help!

Read as much as you can about anxiety and how to help yourself. Visit the Feelgood Counseling Reference Library to see a list of reviewed and recommended books. Go to: [www.feelgoodcounseling.com/reference\\_library.htm](http://www.feelgoodcounseling.com/reference_library.htm)

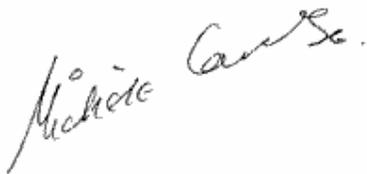
## 6. Conclusion

As we have discussed, anxiety can take many different forms and can be treated in many different ways. There are also many things which one can do oneself to control or significantly reduce the symptoms of anxiety. Most of these take some work and persistence, but when you stick to it, you really can overcome anxiety! Believe in yourself and spend time getting to know what works for you, and you will be surprised how much you can help yourself.

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*For help with this issue or any other problem, visit a Licensed Counselor. Also, have a look at the many other useful eBooklets available on the Native Remedies website, as well as the helpful reading lists in the Online Library at [www.feelgoodcounseling.com/reference\\_library.htm](http://www.feelgoodcounseling.com/reference_library.htm).*

*Good luck and be well!*



*Michele Carelse*

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*Michele Carelse is a Registered Clinical Psychologist and Licensed Counselor with more than 12 years experience. She runs her own private practice, as well as an online counseling and information service.*

*Michele has also developed Native Remedies - a range of natural herbal and homeopathic remedies for adults and children, specifically aimed at promoting emotional, psychological and cognitive health.*

*For more information on Native Remedies health products, go to [www.nativeremedies.com](http://www.nativeremedies.com).*

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