

Anxiety and Depression

Evidence Based Natural Solutions



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Introduction and Background

Depression and anxiety deplete your energy, desire, and hope. They make it difficult for you to take a step that can help you to feel better. Depression is the second most frequent medical condition seen in common medical practice around the world; it is caused by alterations of the neurotransmitters in our central nervous system.^[1] It is a mood disorder that occurs differently in different individuals.

Depression varies among individuals, from mild depression to severe depression. The common prodrome of depression includes irritability, the feeling of sadness, loss of pleasure and interest, trouble concentrating, lack of energy, changes in appetite, worrying a lot, and thoughts of suicide or death.^[2] Consequently, depression can affect your life badly and can disturb your routine activities.

Likewise, anxiety is acutely common; literally, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reports that anxiety is the most general class of mental disorders.^[3] In life, we all experience anxiety at different life stages. Both children and adults experience anxiety. For most people, anxiety lasts for a short time. But for some people, it can go from days to weeks, months, or years. It can revert with time, and sometimes it becomes so severe that it influences your routine life. When the situation becomes much worse, then it is called an anxiety disorder. While symptoms of anxiety vary from individual to individual, usually, people react in a very specific way when they feel anxious. The most common symptoms that you can feel when you are anxious are restlessness; nervousness; being tense; having a fast heartbeat; having a feeling of panic,

dread, or danger; muscle twitching or trembling; heavy sweating; suffering from insomnia; having gastrointestinal problems such as constipation, diarrhea, or gas; or feeling worrying, lethargy, and weakness.^[4] Anxiety is a part of everyone's life, but it depends on us how we handle it.

Many medications are used for the treatment of anxiety and depression. The most commonly prescribed for treating anxiety and depression are Celexa, Zoloft, Prozac, Paxil, and Lexapro. But there is a side effect of using these medications; that's why many individuals seek naturopathic mediation. This article will talk about some of the best naturopathic options available to treat depression and anxiety. But before you take any decision to pick any from the following options, you should discuss your health condition with a naturopathic doctor. It will ensure that you follow the best treatment strategy specific to your needs.

Natural Treatments

Lifestyle Strategies

Exercise Regularly

Doing exercise regularly is a great strategy that can lead you to flare anxious energy. There are researches available that support this strategy. For example, a systematic literature review was conducted to critically evaluate exercise effects on adults who have an anxiety disorder. It found that exercise can be a

solution to anxiety—although the reviewer advised that research of higher quality can only confirm how effective it is.^[5]

Another study suggests that exercise can be beneficial for those people who have anxiety due to quitting smoking.^{[6][7]}

Writing

Finding a strategy that can express your anxiety and depression can make you feel more comfortable. Many types of research report that journaling or some other kind of writing can help individuals to cope with anxiety and depression. Creative writing can help teens and children to lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression.^{[8][9]}

Time Management Strategy

A lot of people start feeling anxious and sometimes go into depression if they have been exposed to high levels of stress or have been continuously experiencing a lot of workload. We all often start feeling anxious when we have a lot of commitment at a time, such as work, family, or health-related tasks. I recommend you create a proper plan for all the next required actions; it will keep you away from this kind of anxiety and depression.

An effective time-management plan can help you focus on one task at one time. Online calendars and book-based planners can help you in managing multiple tasks.



Many kinds of research exist proving that the breakdown of larger tasks into smaller tasks can help people accomplish such tasks with minimum stress.^[10]

Spend Time with Pets

Pets provide love, companionship, and support. Many kinds of research exist suggesting that spending time with pets can be very beneficial for people who are in various mental issues such as depression or anxiety.

Researchers found that loving and caring crickets can improve mental health among older people.^[11]

Another amazing fact published in a systematic literature review suggested that spending time with horses can soothe stress and anxiety associated with the trauma.^[12]

You can also add strategies such as relaxation exercise, aromatherapy, and meditation in your life for treating mental disorders such as anxiety or depression.

Naturopathic Herbal Supplements

Some herbal supplements also exist that can help you a lot in coping with anxiety and depression.

St. John's Wort

St. John's wort, also known as *Hypericum perforatum*, has been used for treating many mental disorders for hundreds of years. People should be very cautious, however, if they are going to treat their anxiety or depression with this supplement.

A systematic literature review of 2016 found that St. John's wort worked more effectively than the placebo for treating mild depression to moderate depression; it also worked as well as the antidepressant medication.^[13]

5-HTP

5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is also very beneficial in improving and regulating the serotonin level in the brain.

Serotonin is the neurotransmitter that affects a lot on the person's mood. Research proved that 5-HTP supplements alleviated depression in patients in one day.^[14]

SAMe

S-Adenosyl methionine (SAMe) is a chemical naturally produced in the human body.

A randomized, controlled trial conducted on the use of this supplement in treating depression in adults did not find any significant result. However, researchers found that this supplement can produce the same effect as antidepressants such as escitalopram or imipramine.^[15]

Most other studies related to this supplement for treating depression and anxiety did not produce any significant result. There is a need for more high-quality research in this area. In Europe, however, this supplement is commonly used as an antidepressant.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

A study conducted that omega-3 fatty acids are not very useful for treating depression. While the authors of this study also reported that there are no serious side effects produced by using this supplement, they also suggested that this supplement can only be useful in treating depression that is due to an omega-3 deficiency.^[16]

Saffron

Many studies exist that depict saffron as an effective supplement for treating depression and anxiety. A nonsystematic literature review suggested saffron for the treatment of anxiety and depression.^[17]

Curcumin

Curcumin has antioxidant properties that can help in the reduction of oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is the main cause of a depressive disorder. Curcumin can thus act very effectively in treating depression.

A study shows that curcumin acts as antianxiety and antidepressant. It releases serotonin neurotransmitter that helps in lowering stress in the brain. Further,



they suggested that the neurotransmitter that curcumin releases also offers protection to the brain.^[18] Another interesting study suggested that curcumin can act as antianxiety among individuals who are obese.^[19]

Vitamin D

Research shows that vitamin D plays an essential role in warding off anxiety and depression. In a study, authors found that people who were depressed after receiving vitamin D showed a noticeable improvement in their mood.^[20]

A study of 2015 reported that individuals found with symptoms of depression or anxiety who have a lower level of calcidiol. Calcidiol is a byproduct that produces a breakdown of vitamin D.^[21]

Zinc

Zinc is an essential mineral for the human body. Its deficiency can lead to emotional instability, depression, anxiety, and irritability.^[22] Another study showed that zinc has potential roles in the treatment of depressive disorders.^[23]

Vitamin B₁₂

Vitamin B₁₂ helps a lot in improving mood. Its deficiency can reduce serotonin chemicals that help to regulate mood. The reduction of serotonin can thus cause a depressive mood. A study revealed that vitamin B₁₂ deficiency doubles the risk of a very severe kind of depression.^[24]

Folate

The deficiency of folate (also known as folic acid) is also linked with depression. Folate acts as an antidepressant in improving mood.

Many studies exist revealing that folic acids play a very essential role in treating anxiety and depression.^{[25][26]}

Conclusion

Untreated anxiety and depression can make your life stressful. However, you can treat anxiety and depression with many natural treatments, such as lifestyle changes strategies, or through herbal supplements and medication. You may have to try many methods to find the best way that works for you perfectly. Your doctor can help you in a good way in this regard.



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