

*God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.  
That Your way may be known on earth, Your saving health among all nations. Psalms 67:1-2*

## **Anxiety–Stress**

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that millions of Americans are afflicted by major stress related disorders. Anxiety alone is said to affect over 19 million Americans, but fewer than 25 percent of these ever receive any clinical help. Untreated stress has been shown to influence the development of other disorders such as headaches, hypertension, ulcers, heart disease and even cancer. Chronic or even severe acute stress can often cause long-term imbalance to the nervous and immune system. The same emergency chemicals that may be life-saving in an emergency, may also linger too long and leave behind them a trail of damaged emotional response, memory impairment, sleep disturbance, sexual dysfunction, chronic fatigue, and blood sugar irregularities.

Evidence suggests that this group of disorders is growing at an alarming rate, affecting greater numbers of youth throughout the world. We loosely include among the stress disorders seen in our clinic panic and anxiety attacks. Once a person suffers from either panic or anxiety attacks, it often takes considerable time to recalibrate the nervous system towards a more normal response to stressful stimuli. Medications may be required to stabilize the patient, but more often than not, a careful regimen of lifestyle changes can bring about the desired healing.

### **Adrenaline rush**

Most people have experienced an “adrenaline rush.” For some it happened when stopped by the police for speeding, or chased by an angry dog, or during a heated argument. The heart pounds, the muscles get tense, a

### **Panic disorder symptoms**

- Reoccurring episodes of intense fear
- Heart palpitations
- Sweating palms
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- A sense of unreality
- An uncontrollable fear of death.

### **Generalized anxiety disorder**

- Chronic and excessive concern about health, work, relationships
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Internal sensations of trembling
- External muscular twitching
- Dizziness
- Irritability
- Muscle tension and headaches.

## **Today's Promise**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*  
Philippians 4:6–7 NIV.

bead sweat may appear on the forehead. This “flight or fight” response is the body’s emergency system, our maximum alert and readiness condition. It is automatic and powerful. Once the stress chemicals, cortisol and adrenaline, are released from the adrenal glands, the entire body instantly responds. The problem with this natural response is the fact that the body may over-react to simple, non-threatening stimuli, resulting in long-term damage to mind and muscle.

One little group of cells in the brain called the amygdala plays a central role in the fear feelings associated with an event or thought. These cells respond to a warning signal before we are even consciously aware of a danger. Even though the rational part of the brain gives an “all clear” message to the other parts of the brain, the amygdala may stubbornly hang on to its emergency chemicals, generating a lingering sense of fear.

Scientists are still trying to unravel the wide variety “stress buster” chemicals which are often available in the diet or may be

## Watch what you drink!

Both coffee and alcohol can cause biochemical chaos in the brain and body

- An increase in lactic acid (related to panic attacks)
- A reduction in adenosine (“brake system of brain”)
- Drop in melatonin production (required for sleep and night-time repair)
- Loss of neurologically important nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, thiamine, niacin and vitamin B<sub>6</sub>.

increased by natural therapies.

It is most important to understand that even without a major stressful event, the body’s ability to tolerate a psychological or physical challenge may be seriously compromised by lifestyle inadequacies. Improper sleep, imbalanced nutrition, lack of exercise and sunlight, and over exposure to pollution can each contribute to mental disruptions such as anxiety and panic. Daily sunlight exposure, for example, is required for the body to synchronize its internal clocks and regulate normal body functions.

In addition, the rays of light penetrate the skin to create the mood elevating vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Australian researchers recently reported that vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplement have been useful for significantly alleviating SAD (Season Affective Disorder) which is characterized by carbohydrate craving, chronic desire to sleep, and very low motivation. Several generations ago, our grandmothers used cod liver oil as a winter remedy for the blues, today we have options that include full spectrum lights for work or home, and selective use of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation.

### Stress-busting chemicals

GABA

Selenium

Hydroxytryptamine

Tryptophan

Glycine

Magnesium

Endorphins

### Natural methods

Tomato, Valerian root extract, Rehmannia glutinosa

Brazil nuts

Pineapple

Evening primrose seed, sunflower seeds

Carob, caraway seed, pumpkin seed

Leafy greens, purslane, beans

Music, massage, sauna