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Anxiety- How Naturopathic Medicine can Help

Anxiety can be a scary and isolating situation, leaving you feeling vulnerable and fearful. Physical symptoms of increased heart rate, shortness of breath, increased sweating and a heavy chest are often accompanied by intense fear that can feel life threatening, and a spiraling of irrational thoughts.

The severity of anxiety varies inversely with the degree of coping skills we have learned through our childhood and adult years. It is very common to experience some degree of anxiety with an increase of stressful events in one's life. In addition, however, long term stress causes our adrenal glands (the stress-coping glands) to become weak, leading to heightened anxiety, low / irregular blood sugar levels and a decrease in coping mechanisms. Hormonal imbalances such as pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS), menopause and an over- or underactive thyroid can also lead to anxiety.

Naturopathic medicine addresses both the physical and emotional aspects of anxiety. Specific nutrients such as chromium, vitamin B6, magnesium and a B vitamin complex address blood sugar, hormonal and neurotransmitter imbalances. As anxiety attacks can be triggered by low blood sugar, the correct ratio of complex carbohydrates, protein and fat supplied by whole grains, sufficient protein sources and abundant vegetables is essential to having consistent energy and a positive mood throughout the day.

The mind-body connection can be positively strengthened with homeopathic constitutional or drainage remedies, acupuncture or acupressure to balance energy throughout the body and various breathing and yoga movements to promote relaxation. Correction of hypo- or hyperadrenal gland function with herbal or nutritional remedies such as rhodiola, siberian ginseng, vitamin C, pantothenic acid or glandular extracts is critical for bio-chemical and emotional stability.

To encourage hormonal balance, specific oils and ground seeds can be used to help support the natural rhythm of a woman's cycle. Vitamin B6 is a cofactor in serotonin production, the feel-good neurotransmitter. Vitex agnus (Chastetree) helps increase progesterone production in the body, a hormone that is often low relative to estrogen in PMS-related anxiety.

Anxiety presents with a variety of different symptoms. Your naturopathic doctor can assess which areas of your health and lifestyle may be contributing to this condition. By addressing physical and energetic imbalances, your personalized health management program will give you the tools for a positive, life-changing approach to anxiety.