

Conventional treatment approaches include a prescription of anti-depressant medications, cognitive behavioural therapy, and counseling.

Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) aim to discover the root cause(s) of your anxiety by taking a thorough health history and taking into consideration: your lifestyle behaviours, family history, general health, environmental, social, and psycho-spiritual aspects of your inner and outer life. ND's also utilize physical exams and laboratory tests as part of their investigation into cause(s) of your anxiety.

For example, some medical conditions such as thyroid disorders, diabetes, Vitamin B12, D3, Iron and Magnesium deficiencies, head injuries, and hormone imbalances promote anxiety as a feature symptom. In these cases, anxiety is a symptom and not a primary syndrome in and of itself. Thus, prescribing anti-depressant medication in these cases would be missing the mark and do more harm than good!

Naturopathic doctors employ proven, safe, effective, natural medicines and therapies to correct body-mind imbalances that give rise to feelings of stress and anxiety.

Naturopathic treatment approaches include:

- Clinical Nutrition, Prescription of Natural Supplements, and Lifestyle Counseling
- Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture
- Herbal and Homeopathic Medicine

ND's work toward creating a customized anxiety treatment plan for each individual woman that can be used in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, conventional medical approaches.

Naturopathic treatment goals include:

- Discover the root cause(s) of anxiety
- Treat the root cause(s) of anxiety using proven, safe, effective, natural medicines and therapies
- Resolve anxiety completely or significantly reduce daily feelings of stress and anxiety

- Teach life skills to manage times of higher anxiety
- Prevent relapse of chronic, severe anxiety
- Monitor and address medication effects, side effects and adverse reactions (in the case of anti-depressant or other psychotropic medication use, including sleeping aids)
- Education and Empowerment

KEYS TO HEALING ANXIETY

You can help yourself manage anxiety even before visiting your ND by implementing these 4 proven, safe, effective, natural approaches:

1. MORNING MINDFULNESS

- START your day with a mindfulness practice BEFORE you turn on the news, open your email or look at your phone! (This has the added benefit of making you less likely to even want to check FB or other social media!)
- For busy moms, aim to rise 15 to 30 minutes earlier than your children. (That also means an earlier bedtime for you!)

A morning mindfulness practice could include the following beneficial activities:

- 5 to 30 minutes of breath-focused meditation
- Journaling 3 to 5 items you are thankful for in a "gratitude journal"
- Reading a passage, paragraph, or quote that grounds and inspires you
- 5 to 30 minutes of restorative, mindful yoga

Some resources for your morning mindfulness practice include:

- [A Course in Miracles Work Book](#) (See Marianne Williamson's website)
- [The Anxiety Work Book](#) (Sold at most book stores)
- [Radical Acceptance](#) (Tara Brach)
- [The Gift of Imperfection](#) (Brene Brown)
- [The 5 Minute Journal](#) (I got mine from a friend for Christmas last year!)

- Meditations to Heal Your Life (Louise Hay)
- A Path with Heart (Jack Kornfield)

Starting your day with a mindfulness practice of 5 to 30 minutes (even 5 minutes is very effective!) achieves a “psychological posture” of calm and strong in your nervous system and brain, which can stay with you throughout the day. This practiced “psychological posture” allows you to effectively respond (vs. react) to the problems and challenges that naturally arise in your day.

In other words, you end up tapping into your own inner strength, wisdom, and empowerment for daily decisions and problem solving, leading to increased self-esteem and confidence. That bodes well for more peace, vitality in body and mind, and a better night sleep too!

Mindfulness is best practiced first thing upon waking rather than later in the day. By then it's too late! Your brain and nervous system will already be too tired, wired, and perhaps “defeated” after a typical chaotic day. It is this very chaos and mayhem that keeps you trapped in the cycle of agitation and anxiety.

Consistent morning mindfulness practices are proven to significantly reduce stress and anxiety, while setting you up for better self-regulation and responsiveness. So instead of “reacting”, you are able to maintain your sanity and protect your inner peace and self-esteem.

2. REGULATE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

Unstable blood sugar levels can masquerade as anxiety and even panic attacks!

When your blood sugar drops, adrenalin rises, your heart rate accelerates, and you can be left feeling jittery, agitated, anxious, and perspiring.

Aim to consume three meals and three snacks, tending toward healthy fats and proteins, while minimizing carbs and sugar.

Proteins and Healthy Fats including nuts and seeds, organic eggs, dairy, meat and fish, and avocado and coconut oil achieve blood sugar stability for many hours and fuel your brain with the nourishment it needs to stay calm and strong.

Complex Carbohydrates such as multigrain bread, quinoa, brown rice, oats and millet help maintain healthy blood sugar levels too, while giving you a healthy boost in energy. These foods also minimize cravings for more simple sugars, which spike then quickly drop your blood sugar leading to more anxiety.

Avoid Simple Sugars found in candy, pop, baked goods, and packaged foods. Sugar is proven to cause anxiety in many people, especially young women.

Limit Caffeine found in coffee, black tea, pop, and chocolate because it can also provoke feelings of stress and anxiety in many women, especially young women.

Alcohol is a substance many women gravitate toward because it relaxes them at the end of a long day and eases stressful feelings. It's true that alcohol has this effect, and acts as a natural central nervous system depressant, bringing on a state of relaxation. However, use alcohol with caution and try not to over-rely on these beverages because they trigger blood sugar lows in the middle of the night, creating late night/early morning insomnia, and can promote more anxiety the next day (including spiking your cravings for sugar and caffeine!)

If you feel addicted to sugar, caffeine, or alcohol, call your local ND who can help you break the vicious cycle.

3. EXERCISE

Moving your body for 15 to 30 minutes each day in a way that you enjoy is one of the most well studied and proven lifestyle habits to resolve stressful feelings and anxiety. Exercise can uplift your mood, increase your energy and fitness, and provide you with more strength in body and mind!

Science proves that if your *body* is fit, your *mind* is too!

The following are excellent examples of movement for body and mind mastery, easing anxiety, and promoting health:

- Walking, Nordic Walking (walking with poles), Hiking (especially in nature!)
- Jogging or Running
- Dancing!
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Restorative Yoga

4. NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS

Probiotics, B-vitamins, omega 3 fish oils, iron, vitamin D3, and magnesium can be effective additions to the lifestyle approaches already mentioned in the treatment and management of anxiety for many women.

Talk to your ND before starting natural medicines, as they contain powerful active ingredients that may or may not be right for you.

If you are suffering from stressful feelings and anxiety, we encourage you to try these proven, safe, effective, natural approaches for 30 days!

For a more in depth investigation into the cause(s) of your anxiety and to achieve a customized anxiety treatment plan to meet your specific needs, [click here](#) to book an appointment. (Or go to www.healingfoundations.ca and click on Book An Appointment)



Heidi McGill, ND specializes in naturopathic treatment of mental health for women, children, and men. She is delighted to witness the transformation that takes place in her patients when they become unstuck from health problems such as stress & anxiety. Heidi loves seeing her patients brought back to their natural state of wholeness & wellness, where self-mastery, esteem, & pleasure reside!



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