

Generalised Anxiety Disorder – Fact Sheet

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) has been defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as “is where a person experiences persistent (for a period of at least 6 months), excessive, uncontrollable and out of proportion anxiety about an event/s or situation/s”. People often find it extremely difficult to control or self-regulate this anxiety, therefore; finding it hard to relax and function normally. Anxiety disorders can be acute or chronic and panic attacks can be associated as a result of excess adrenal hormones, particularly adrenaline being produced. Genetics, life events, lifestyle and a progressively disordered physiology is likely to contribute to the development of anxiety like depression.

Signs and symptoms

- Sleep difficulties
- Poor concentration
- Irrational thinking and catastrophising tendencies
- Hypervigilance
- Fatigue
- Restlessness
- Palpitations
- Digestive disturbances
- Sweating
- Irritability
- Panic attacks
- Aches and pains
- Muscle twitching and stiffness

Nutritional Considerations

- Increase intake of fresh fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and high quality proteins as they are rich in all essential macro and micro nutrients.
- Consume wholegrains that are low GI to stabilise blood glucose levels.
- Consume essential fatty acids.
- Reduce intake of animal protein sources and focus on complex carbohydrates and vegetarian sources for protein.
- Avoid refined and processed foods, caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid artificial sugars, colours and chemicals.
- Reduce/eliminate gluten containing foods.
- Try small frequent meals.

Other Suggestions

- Engage in regular exercise to improve mood.
- Visit a counsellor, psychotherapist or psychologist.
- Meditation to focus on breathing exercises and relaxation. Yoga may also help.
- Aim to get at least 8 hours sleep each night.

Customised nutritional plans comprising of a specific food plan with the support of nutrient/herbal supplements can be very effective in the management of anxiety. If you require support please visit www.good4younutrition.com.au