

anti -anxiety diet

Anxiety is often triggered by stress in our live. Many children usually suffer from exam anxiety. lets see how to reduce stress and anxiety through proper diet.

ANTI-ANXIETY DIET: THE BEST WAY TO ALLEVIATE STRESS AND ANXIETY

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Anxiety is often triggered by [stress](#) in our live. Many children usually suffer from exam anxiety. Have you noticed your child biting his nails a little too much during his exams? Or may be eating too much? The reason is "Exam anxiety". Exams totally frighten children and they start worrying too much. Anxiety is probably one of the most researched human traits in recent years. It is excessive worry about upcoming exams which is one of the types of state anxiety affects children in every field of life, whenever students of all ages have to be evaluated, assessed, and graded with regard to their abilities, achievements, or interests. This anxiety causes the student to perform badly and it interferes with normal studies. Highly anxious children are characterized by acquired habits and attitudes that involve negative self-perceptions and expectations. These self-deprecating habits and attitudes dispose anxious children to experience fear and heightened physiological activity in situations such as examinations in which they are being evaluated, and influence the manner in which they interpret and respond to events in the environment. Students, who have developed a proper attitude to learning, memory and study and learned good techniques and habits, need not have to worry about stress and anxiety. Anxiety associated stress will cause great loss of memory and memory blocks during examinations. Parents should encourage children to be confident and overcome their worries and ensure them that they can perform well. In this article, we can understand the causes of anxiety and how good dieting help children to come out from anxiety. **Exam anxiety can be caused by following reasons:**

- Most students have experienced or are simply afraid of "blinking out" on an exam. The inability to perform in an exam can lead to "anticipatory anxiety". The truth is worrying about how anxiety might affect them is worse than anxiety itself. Because this anticipatory anxiety can build up as the exam approaches and it will interfere in the student's ability to adequately prepare for the exam.
- When a student fails to adequately prepare for an exam, this will definitely contribute to exam anxiety. Lack of proper time management, poor study skills and lack of proper organization can lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed.
- Some students who are usually forced to cram for an exam at the last minute usually do not feel as confident as those that have been able to cover all their material through following a structured plan for studying.
- The lack of self confidence, the fear of failure and other negative thought processes will also contribute to exam anxiety.
- Studies have shown that exam anxiety may also have genetic component.
- If a student sees his or self-esteem closely tied to the outcome of his or her academic work, the result can be pretty bad! In cases like these, the student may actually spend more of his or her time worrying about the exam than actually reading for it.
- Imbalanced diet with inadequate nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, essential amino acids and folic acids.

Symptoms of exam anxiety

a) Emotional symptoms - Extreme feelings of helplessness, fear, anger, disappointment. In some cases uncontrollable crying or laughing, worry,

Frustration, discouragement, depression, panic and hopelessness.

- b) Cognitive symptoms – “going blank” as soon as the question paper arrives, finding it very difficult to concentrate, racing thoughts, speaking ill of oneself, finding it difficult to organize ones thoughts and making comparisons of oneself with others. Scattered attention, irrational thoughts, self-defeating thoughts, task-disruptive daydreaming and self-abusing thoughts.
- c) Physical symptoms – Feelings of nausea, diarrhea, headaches, changes in the body temperature, dizziness, shortness of breath, fainting, dry mouth, tight muscles, insomnia, upset stomach, unable to eat, increased perspiration, sweaty palms, increased heart rate and more frequent urination
- d) Behavioral symptoms – pacing back and forth, fidgeting, substance abuse, social withdrawal, avoidance of friends and family, unusual irritability with others, procrastination through increased socializing, tense movements, losing focus of actions, less coordinated movements, nail biting and "escaping" behaviours.

Anxiety can be treated medically with psychological counseling. In some cases, anxiety may be treated at home, without a doctor's supervision. In such cases, parenting help is one of the most crucial things that can help children take the edge off their stress and anxiety. This can be possible by keeping them in good diet and teaching them about anxiety management techniques. Lifestyle issues are main contributing factors such as inadequate rest, poor nutrition, too many stimulants, insufficient exercise, not scheduling available time, not prioritizing commitments. However, balanced nutrition is essential to maintain overall good health and to manage stress and anxiety as well. When children are going through a period of stress, they need more of all nutrients. If they are lacking with nutrients, their body will not be equipped to handle exam anxiety effectively. This article highlights the anti-anxiety diet to help children cope up with exam stress and anxiety.

Take a multivitamin and mineral supplement: Studies have shown that the body depletes its stores of nutrients when under stress and anxiety, mainly protein and vitamins B, C and A. So, it is good to provide orange juice, squash, potatoes, apricots, limes, bananas, avocados, tomatoes, and peaches to those who are under prolonged stress. Mostly whole (unprocessed) foods will help children get away from anxiety. Because refined, white flour and processed foods starve the body of B vitamins and weaken the body, hence promote feelings of anxiety. It is important to note that sweet foods and products are especially harmful, since their digestion causes a dramatic drop in blood sugar which can be experienced as apprehensive anxiety.

Cut out caffeine: One of the more distressing effects of anxiety is insomnia, which is the inability to fall asleep or to remain asleep. It is important to regain regular sleep patterns as lack of sleep can lead to disturbing symptoms of anxiety. But Caffeine causes a fight-or-flight response in our body which also inhibits sleep if too much is ingested. It is strongly recommended to sleep well before an exam as last minute studies only add to confusion and stress level. So drinking coffee during exam time should be strictly avoided and replaced with health drinks.

The following food chart will help parents to know about the anti-anxiety foods. Changes in the diet will help beating anxiety.

Simple anti anxiety Diet chart

S.No	Foods to be included	Foods to be Avoided
1.	Yogurt	Fizzy drinks
2.	Bananas,apples, pomegranates,orange,papaya etc	Processed food
3.	Vegatables	White bread
4.	Wholegrain foods	Chips
5.	Brown rice	Pastry
6.	Beans	Cakes
7.	Figs	Caffeine
8.	Chicken	Sugar
9.	Cottage Cheese	Fatty milk
10.	Skimmed milk	Chocolate
11.	Fresh fish	Cheese
12.	Poached Egg	Fast Food

13.	Broccoli	Strong spices
14.	Dried fruit	Highly acidic foods, such as tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers, which are injurious to spleen
15.	Porridge	sodas or energy drinks
16.	Slightly salty foods, Baked potato	shellfish
17.	Peanut butter	Fried foods
18.	Garlic	tea, cola
19.	Spinach, greens	pickles

Suggested anti-anxiety diet

Early morning: skimmed milk with health drinks like Horlicks and Complan.

Break fast: Chappathi, White upma, Ragi upma, Brown rice palak chappathi, Brown rice puttu with banana, Brown bread sand witch with pea nut butter, whole meal bread toast topped with peanut butter, Calcium-fortified orange juice, Dates, Apple.

Mid morning: Pomegranate juice, Porridges, Fruit salads, Skimmed milk shakes.

Lunch: Vegetable rice, Keerai rice, Egg rice, curd rice with mint chutney, Plain rice with smashed spinach dal, Poached egg, Baked fish, beans porriyal, garlic columbu, figs kootu, chicken gravy, Vegetable salad.

Tea time: Brown aval upma, Sundal custards, mixed dried fruit and nuts, whole-wheat crackers with almond butter .

Dinner: Oats upma, Pesaratte, Adai, Wheat kitchadi, Amla chutney, banana bread pudding.

Bed time: Health drinks with skimmed milk

Eat complex carbohydrates: During periods of anxiety the body diverts blood from various parts of the body to the muscle tissues in order to supply them with the oxygen needed by them. One of the main areas where blood is used most is around the digestive tract. Blood is sent there to absorb nutrients from the food we eat. As blood is diverted away from the stomach during anxiety, the digestion slows and the muscles around the stomach can become knotted. This can cause indigestion, heartburn and diarrhea or constipation. Taking a healthy, whole foods diet containing fresh vegetables and fruits, nuts and whole grains are the best insurance against attacks of anxiety. Parents should pay attention to intake of fruits and vegetables which are best eaten raw, such as in a salad state as many vitamins and the enzymes are destroyed by cooking. The blood vessels and nerves are originating in the neck and shoulders and routed across the head to the face. When the body is under stress these areas of the body are usually the first to become tense. It is the duty to the parents to develop a healthy and confident attitude towards exams to their children. Oats are important for the nervous system.

Take plenty of fruits: Anxiety can be reduced by changing the food habits and diet. Fruit plays an important role in our diet. Fruit is known to be human's natural diet. Tryptophan an amino acids helps our brain produce chemicals that improve mood and have a relaxing effect. Milk, bananas, oats, soy, poultry, cheese, nuts, peanut butter and sesame seeds are good sources of tryptophan. It is important to reduce consuming animal foods.

High-protein foods elevate brain levels of dopamine and norepinephrine which are associated with higher levels of anxiety and stress. Salt increases the blood pressure, deplete adrenal glands, and causes emotional instability. It is better to add a salt substitute that has potassium rather than sodium. Avoid junk foods high in salt such as bacon, pickles, sausage, etc.

Stay well-hydrated: Sweating is a normal bodily reaction and is designed to reduce the body temperature. As the body heats up, sweat is released onto it through sweat glands. As the sweat evaporates it takes heat with it, cooling the body. During periods of anxiety the body is preparing itself for either flight or fight and releases sweat to cool the impending exertions. As the anxiety subsides sweat levels return to normal. So it is also important to include fruit juices such as orange juice, lime juice, grape juice, pomegranate juice, tender coconut water in our diet.

Conclusion: Physical health will have a direct influence on our emotional wellness. Since anxiety is a normal reaction to [stress](#), it will interrupt with a tense situation in the working place and studies. When anxiety becomes an excessive, the irrational dread will occupy our life. It will soon become a disabling disorder for us. Although tension and daily stresses are unavoidable, we can relieve and manage stress better by adding the right anti anxiety foods in our diet.

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