

Anxiety is a common problem and can be caused by a range of factors, including diet, lifestyle, sleep, exercise and gut health. Managing anxiety requires a holistic approach that addresses multiple aspects of health.

Dietary recommendations

Check for food intolerances

Food intolerances can cause poor gut health and as a result can trigger low moods and anxiety. Discuss the possibility of a food diary, and elimination diet or testing with your practitioner.

Eat a rainbow of fruit and vegetables per day

Colourful fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that help to protect the gut and the brain from oxidative stress. Too much oxidative damage can be a contributing factor in anxiety.

1. Fermented Foods

Yoghurt, kimchi, sauerkraut and kefir contain probiotics, which improve gut health and reduce anxiety. There is a strong link between gut health and brain health. 90% of the body's serotonin is produced in the gut and transported into the brain. Serotonin is synthesised by probiotics in the gut.



2. Complex carbohydrates and protein

Eat a combination of complex carbohydrates and protein with every meal and snack. This combination helps to keep blood sugar levels stable and ensures a steady supply of serotonin to the brain.

3. Magnesium-rich foods

Magnesium is essential for brain health and normal neurotransmitter production. Magnesium can be found in green leafy vegetables, dark chocolate, nuts, seeds and wholegrains. Research has consistently found a close link between magnesium insufficiency and anxiety.

4. Zinc-rich foods

Zinc helps reduce anxiety because it supports brain function, neurotransmitter balance, and stress regulation. Zinc-rich foods include pumpkin seeds, cashew nuts, hemp seeds, chickpeas, lentils, black beans and whole grains. It is also highly concentrated in beef, oysters, chicken and fish.

5. B-vitamin-rich foods

B vitamins are essential for normal brain function and normal brain energy production. B vitamins can be found in avocados, sunflower seeds, leafy greens and legumes. They are also found in animal products.



6. L-theanine-rich foods

L-theanine promotes relaxation and reduces the symptoms of stress as it is needed for a neurotransmitter called GABA. L-theanine is found in green tea, black and matcha tea.

7. L-tryptophan-rich foods

Tryptophan is needed for the production of serotonin and can be found in nuts and seeds, tofu and other soya products, oats, bananas, pineapple, dark chocolate and lentils. It can also be found in fish, eggs, cheese and turkey.

8. Choline-rich foods

Choline is a vitamin-like substance that is necessary for neurotransmitter function and mental clarity. Choline can be found in broccoli, shiitake mushrooms, cauliflower, kidney beans, potatoes and wheat germ. Choline is also found in eggs and salmon.



9. Omega 3

Omega 3 is an essential fat for the brain. It is important to consume enough Omega 3 each day for the brain cells to work effectively and to keep inflammation in check, which can otherwise lead to poor mental health. Low levels of Omega 3 fatty acids are linked to higher anxiety levels. Foods such as walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds and algae oil contain Omega 3. Fatty fish and its oil are also a source of Omega 3.

Food and drinks to avoid

+ Caffeine (coffee, energy drinks)

Caffeine can trigger adrenaline and cortisol, leading to jitteriness and increased anxiety. Avoid coffee, energy drinks and caffeine-based supplements.

+ Sugar and processed foods

Cause blood sugar spikes and crashes, worsening mood swings.

+ Artificial sweeteners (aspartame, sucralose)

Can negatively impact neurotransmitter function.

+ Alcohol

Temporarily numbs anxiety but worsens symptoms over time by disrupting sleep and depleting neurotransmitters.

+ Fried and fast food

High in trans fats and refined carbs, which trigger inflammation and stress responses in the brain.

Lifestyle changes to reduce anxiety

 Diaphragmatic breathing	Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
 Box breathing	Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
 Daily meditation (10–20 min/day)	Lowers cortisol and improves emotional regulation.
 Mindfulness techniques (focusing on the present moment)	Reduce racing thoughts and worry.
 Journaling and gratitude practice	Writing down negative thoughts helps release emotional burdens. Practising gratitude daily can shift focus to positive aspects of life.
 Aerobic exercise (30–45 min, 3–5x per week)	Running, cycling, and swimming boost endorphins.
 Yoga and pilates	Combines movement with deep breathing to calm the nervous system.
 Walking in nature (Grounding)	Helps clear the mind and reduce stress.
 Strength training and movement	Lifting weights improves dopamine levels, which enhances mood and mental resilience. Moving every hour (stretching, walking) prevents anxiety buildup.

 Consistent sleep schedule	Go to bed and wake up at the same time daily.
 No screens before bed	Avoid blue light from phones 1 hour before sleep.
 Dark, cool room	Keep the bedroom cool (60–67°F or 18°C) and completely dark.
 Relaxation routine	Take a warm bath, read a book, or do light stretching before bed.
 Connection and social support	Spending time with friends, family or pets can reduce stress and boost oxytocin levels. Joining support groups (online or in-person) provides emotional reassurance.
 Limit social media use	Max 1–2 hours/day to avoid comparison and stress. Unplug before bedtime to let the mind unwind naturally.

Professional help and therapy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Helps reframe anxious thoughts.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Uses meditation and awareness practices to manage stress.

Seeking help

A therapist, counsellor, or coach can provide personalised strategies.

Talk to your practitioner regarding the best supplementation for you. You may want to ask them about:

Ashwagandha

Magnesium

Vitamin D

Omega 3

B vitamins

L-theanine

Probiotics

Choline

DRV+ Stay Calm®