How much of your life and energy is sapped by anxiety? Do you find your waking moments clouded by a sense of impending disaster, or outright fear—without any obvious cause? Or is it a constant hum of indefinable worry and tension that leaves you on edge? Are you over-reacting to minor setbacks and are you easily overwhelmed? If you are, then you are likely dealing with the joy-sapping effects of anxiety.

Or maybe you are fine most of the time, but whenever you have to get on an airplane, take a test, or give a public talk, your heart starts to pound and the butterflies whirl in your stomach.

Wherever you fit between these two extremes, reducing anxiety will benefit your relationships, your happiness, your physical and mental health—and maybe even your job success, too.

In this Terry Talks Nutrition, we are going to look at the harmful impact of excessive anxiety in our lives, and a surprising, clinically studied botanical for anxiety that, in scientific tests, performed as well as prescription drugs!

Stop the World, I Want to Get Off!!

We live in a world with 24-hour news channels, financial woes, record unemployment, and frequent acts of terrorism. Technological advancements have shackled us to constant communication and exhaustive availability. Multi-tasking has robbed us of the tranquility of quiet moments alone. Electric lights allow us to ignore our biological clocks. And the food we eat can impede our body’s natural ability to balance stress hormones.

All this stress results in a huge increase in people’s anxiety levels. And anxiety isn’t just bad for our spirit—it is hard on our bodies, raising blood pressure and heart rate immediately, and adversely affecting sleep, digestion, libido, weight gain and hormonal balance in the long term. Stress and anxiety changes the immune system, leaving us vulnerable to infections and even increases your cancer risk!

Anxiety can impact our lives in ways that may surprise you. It can prevent you from functioning on the job with confidence. It influences the risks you are willing to take to improve your employment. Anxiety might make you keep good ideas to yourself instead of sharing them publicly. It has been my observation, after many years of working with all kinds of people, including successful business leaders, that people with less anxiety have higher levels of financial success. It makes sense to me that reducing anxiety could not only benefit your health and happiness, it could have a tremendous impact on your bank account, too.

Since we are awash in an environment saturated with stress, with ever-increasing levels of anxiety, it only makes sense to take steps to defend ourselves and restore some balance to our lives. The answer will likely surprise you: A new standardization of Echinacea angustifolia root.

Echinacea for Anxiety? Really?

Echinacea is widely-known for support of the immune system—in fact, it may be one of the best-known herbal remedies in the world. One would think that with millions of people worldwide using echinacea, an anti-anxiety effect would have been detected before now. It turns out there are good reasons for missing this effect. First, only one species, grown in controlled conditions and using special extraction procedures, produces the plant compounds that reduce anxiety. Second, high doses don’t work to relieve anxiety. Most immune supplementation is at high dosages, or standardized to high amounts of immune stimulating compounds. In a country where “more” is equated with “better,” it is hard to conceive of active compounds that work only in a narrow therapeutic window of activity. It took a team of European researchers to unlock this secret from echinacea.

The first indication that echinacea might have previously undiscovered effects came when researchers at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, analyzing different species of echinacea, found that some of the plants contained compounds known to influence brain chemistry. These compounds could greatly reduce anxiety. In a comparison test of 7 different echinacea extracts, only one—Echinacea angustifolia root—possessed high levels of the special compounds associated with relieving anxiety. These compounds are able to safely bind to brain receptors that trigger feelings of calm and relaxation.

The researchers then set about finding ways to extract and concentrate these unusual compounds.

Clinical and Scientific Study Results

An extract of this special echinacea was tested in human volunteers experiencing increased anxiety and tension. After only one day of use, the participants experienced a significant reduction on the anxiety measurement scale, which increased to a 25% reduction by day 7. The participants did not have issues with drowsiness or confusion, and there was no interference with their daytime activities. [Haller J. The effects of an Echinacea preparation in human subjects experiencing mild to moderate anxiety. Data in publication. 2010]

In a scientific study, 7 types of echinacea extracts were compared to the prescription anti-anxiety drug, chlordiazepoxide (also known by the brand name Librium). While 2 echinacea preparations showed some mild effects, only one demonstrated a robust ability to reduce anxiety in a wide dosage range comparable to the prescription drug. The results of this study were amazing. Once again, this special echinacea root extract was found to not only meet or exceed the drug anti-anxiety effects, but to not cause drowsiness, which can be a common side effect of prescription drugs for anxiety. [J. Haller, J. Hohmann, T. F. Freund. The effect of Echinacea preparations in three laboratory tests of anxiety: comparison with chlordiazepoxide. Phytotherapy Research. 9999; 9999. 2010.]

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The list of potential adverse effects for chlor-diazepoxide are: drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, edema, nausea, constipation, menstrual abnormalities, jaundice, altered libido, involuntary movements, and controlled substance dependence/addiction. And the potential serious adverse effects for the special echinacea preparation (barring allergies)? None. [Haller J. The side effect profile of Echinacea. Effects on cognition and locomotion. Data in publication. 2010]

How Does It Work?

The scientists report that this special Echinacea angustifolia root contains substances that bind to certain brain receptors that signal our bodies to reduce anxiety and restore calm. Two of these are cannabinoid receptors, activation of which has been proven to reduce anxiety. However, the special echinacea did not cause the serious side effects commonly associated with prescription drugs. The scientists reported that this new specialized echinacea compound shows great promise as an entirely new way to effectively address anxiety and improve mood.

Dosage and Safety – More Is Not Better

No significant side effects were experienced by the participants in the clinical trial. However, dosage levels have been found to be very important. At high levels (hundreds of milligrams) echinacea acts as an immune stimulant. However, anxiety relief only occurs at low doses, and disappears when the dosage is greatly increased. Typically, no more than 20 mg at a time is necessary for significant stress, tension and anxiety relief. This special echinacea root extract can be used several times a day if necessary. It also can be taken an hour before a stressful event such as public speaking, a presentation or before traveling by air. Anytime you are presented with a stressful situation or if you deal with anxiety on a daily basis, this special Echinacea angustifolia root has been proven to work as effectively as prescription drugs without the side effects.

Conclusion

If anxiety is robbing you of rest, energy, and spirit, don’t wait another minute. There are effective, proven, natural interventions that can make a real difference in your life. The special 20 mg echinacea extract, developed specifically to reduce anxiety, works quickly to restore a sense of balance. You will feel the difference the first day, and it keeps getting better. You can start on the road to getting your life back today.

Look for an Echinacea angustifolia with special standardization:

Proprietary Complex: 20 mg Narrow-leaved Coneflower Root (Echinacea angustifolae radix) Extract standardized for biochemical fingerprint or proprietary echinacosides.