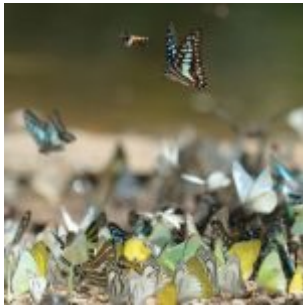


Anxious Much?



It seems anxiety is the buzz word these days (no pun intended) and something many of us can relate to experiencing at some point in our lives. Anxiety affects us on many levels, from a slight feeling of uneasiness, to the 'butterflies' in the stomach feeling and on to more extreme levels of anxiety often experienced as panic attacks, rapid breathing and a rise in heart rate. Yet, no matter what level of anxiety we experience, it all has a wearing down effect on our nervous and endocrine systems which eventually leads to physical exhaustion.

The effects of anxiety can go unnoticed for many years while the body is slowly worn down and this is where our diet can make a difference. Masking tiredness and exhaustion is easily done when we are consistently using stimulants such as caffeine and sugar to keep us moving through the day. However this can only go on for so long before other parts of the body will start to show symptoms that something is up. These symptoms can be anything from weight loss or weight gain, bowel and other digestive disturbances, sleep issues, insomnia and more.

One of the things we can do to support our bodies with anxiety is to be more aware of the foods we are consuming. For example, eating foods that are stimulating (or overstimulating) to the nervous system puts the body in a more heightened state and as a result can increase the likelihood of anxiety. Once overstimulated, it is very difficult to feel centered or calm and often we find ourselves racing through things or in a spin with our daily tasks. For this reason it makes sense that we avoid sugary and processed foods, as well as coffee and other caffeinated beverages such as black tea, cola and some energy drinks.

Each these substances increase nervous system activity which can further exacerbate anxiety. Even if we are not aware of it, the slightest bit of racing in our nervous system means our bodies are working overtime to keep up, which will always result in unnecessary tiredness or exhaustion.

So what are the types of foods that might support us to stay steady and calm and not go into overdrive?

Eating a wholefoods diet that consists of nuts, seeds, wholegrains and legumes, along with a variety of whole protein sources including eggs and lean meats, is a great start in supporting a more balanced and harmonious body that can handle those more challenging moments in life. The foods we choose to eat will always lay the foundation for which we will be able to respond to life's every day challenges. That foundation can be either solid and steady from choosing those foods that support us, or shaky and erratic, from choosing the foods that do not. Either way the choice is ours.

Learn in more detail about the relationship between sugar and anxiety here from Naturopath Jesabe Warner.