

Natural Help 4...

Anxiety



What is Anxiety?

Everyone has felt a little anxious at some time point in their lives. In fact, some degree of [anxiety](#) is perfectly normal! Both **children and adults may suffer from routine anxiety**, which is often brought on by physical situations. These situations can range from the first day of school to job interviews, flying on an airplane, or common [anxiety](#) felt on your wedding day.

There are many different types of [anxiety disorders](#), including generalized [anxiety disorder](#) (GAD), [panic disorders](#), [phobias](#), obsessive compulsive disorder ([OCD in adults](#) and [OCD in children](#)), and stress disorders like [post traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD).

Diagnosing Anxiety

There are no laboratory tests that can diagnose [anxiety disorders](#), although some specific tests may be performed by a health care professional to rule out disease or serious illness. It is very **difficult to diagnosis anxiety, as it involves a wide variety of symptoms** that often differ from person to person.

A person may display physical signs of [anxiety](#) – such as profuse sweating-- or they may appear completely normal. A personal history may be reviewed and tests may be run to rule out the following factors that may be causing the symptoms of [anxiety](#):

- Physical disorders (e.g. thyroid problems)
- Diet
- Prescription drugs
- Alcohol abuse
- Mood-altering drugs
- Caffeine consumption in large amounts
- Work environment (overly noisy or dangerous)

In most cases, the most important information is the patient's psychological and social history. Anyone with chronic [anxiety](#) for no apparent reason should see a healthcare professional.

Signs of Anxiety Disorder

Signs of anxiety disorders include:

- Endless checking or rechecking actions

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- A constant and unrealistic worry about everyday occurrences and activities
- Fear and [anxiety](#) for no apparent reason

These symptoms must be **severe enough to seriously affect social and occupational functioning** to a significant degree.

Below is a short overview of [anxiety disorders](#) and their related symptoms. For more detailed information on these [anxiety disorders](#), click on the links provided.

Panic Disorder

The main characteristic of panic disorder is the **occurrence of panic attacks along with fear of them happening again**. People suffering from panic disorder may also experience symptoms of agoraphobia (fear of public places) or situations in which they might have a panic attack and be unable to leave or to find help. This can create a cycle of [anxiety](#) and apprehension with the impending fear of the [anxiety](#) bringing on a panic attack, and so forth. About 25% of patients with panic disorder develop obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Symptoms of panic disorder include:

- A sudden, uncontrollable attack of terror
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- The feeling of being out of control or a terribly frightening feeling, with a strong desire to flee or avoid the situation altogether

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

GAD is the **most commonly diagnosed anxiety disorder** and occurs most frequently in young adults. People with this [anxiety disorder](#) find themselves **worrying excessively for a period of at least six months**, accompanied by three or more of the following physical symptoms (only one of the following symptoms is needed in children to diagnose GAD):

- Headaches
- Trembling, twitching
- Lightheadedness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Nausea
- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating, hot flashes
- Change in appetite
- Frequent need to use bathroom
- Easily startled
- Lump in throat, difficulty swallowing
- Sleeplessness
- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Social Phobia

If you've ever been described as "painfully shy," you know it's no exaggeration! Extreme shyness (also known as social [anxiety disorder](#) or social phobia) can be agonizing. It keeps you from living a normal life, trying new things, making friends and having healthy self-esteem.

People with this [anxiety disorder](#) have a **deep rooted fear of situations in which they may be exposed to possible scrutiny of others**. It involves a fear of being humiliated or judged. It can appear as a fear of performing certain functions in the presence of others, such as public speaking, eating in public or using public lavatories.

About 3.7% of the U.S. population ages 18 to 54 - approximately 5.3 million Americans – will suffer from social phobia in any given year! **Social phobia occurs in women twice as often as in men**, although a higher proportion of men seek help for this disorder. The disorder typically begins in adolescence and rarely develops after age 25. Social phobia can be debilitating. Many people with this illness have a hard time making and keeping friends.

Symptoms can include:

- Canceling social events at the last minute
- Fearing new activities
- Avoiding contact and interaction with others
- Becoming easily embarrassed
- Frequently feeling down or lonely
- Using alcohol or drugs to help relax in social situations
- Worrying for days or weeks about an upcoming social event
- Fearing others may be judgmental
- Feeling self-conscious in everyday situations
- Having an extreme fear of being in an embarrassing situation
- Going to great lengths to avoid social situations

While almost everyone finds some social situation uncomfortable, those suffering with social phobia may avoid social situations completely. Some people feel extreme shyness in certain situations, but not in others.

These situations may include:

- Public speaking
- Meeting new people, especially members of the opposite sex and authority figures
- Making phone calls
- Eating or drinking in front of others

Physical symptoms often accompany the intense [anxiety](#) of social phobia and may include:

- Blushing
- Profuse sweating
- Trembling
- Nausea
- Difficulty talking

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Other Phobias:

Other phobias concern activities or situations (e.g. fear of flying), while many are focused on harmless animals or other objects. Some of the more common specific phobias focus on small enclosed places, heights, escalators, tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, dogs, and injuries involving blood. Phobias are more than just extreme fear - they are **irrational fear of a particular thing or situation**. You may feel fine flying in airplanes but be unable to go above the 5th floor of an office building. While adults with phobias realize that these fears are irrational, they often find that facing, or even thinking about facing, the feared object or situation **brings on a panic attack or severe anxiety**.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

People suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder are constantly **occupied with intrusive and unwanted thoughts** – often, although not always, accompanied with uncontrolled, ritualized behavior that eases the [anxiety](#). This affects between 2-3% of the population and is much more common than was previously thought. OCD affects males and females equally. The symptoms of OCD, which are the obsessions and compulsions, may vary.

Common obsessions include:

- Fear of dirt or contamination by germs
- Fear of causing harm to another
- Fear of making a mistake
- Fear of being embarrassed or behaving in a socially unacceptable manner
- Fear of thinking evil or sinful thoughts
- Need for order, excessive neatness or exactness
- Excessive doubt and the need for constant reassurance

Common compulsions include:

- Repeatedly bathing, showering, or washing hands
- Refusing to shake hands or touch doorknobs
- Repeatedly checking things, such as locks or stoves
- Constant counting, mentally or aloud, while performing routine tasks
- Constantly arranging things in a certain way
- Eating foods in a specific order
- Being stuck on words, images or thoughts, usually disturbing, that won't go away and can interfere with sleep
- Repeating specific words, phrases or prayers
- Needing to perform tasks a certain number of times
- Collecting or hoarding items with no apparent value

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This disorder can arise as a **result of a severely distressing or traumatic event**. Signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder typically appear within three months of the traumatic event. However, in some instances, they may not occur until years after the event and may include:

- Flashbacks and distressing dreams associated with the traumatic event



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- Distress at anniversaries of the trauma
- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings and activities associated with the trauma
- Feelings of detachment or from others and an inability to have loving feelings
- Markedly diminished interest or participation in activities that once were an important source of satisfaction
- Hopelessness about the future — no hope of a family life, career or living
- Physical and psychological hypersensitivity (after the trauma) with at least two of the following reactions: trouble sleeping, anger, difficulty concentrating, an exaggerated, startled response to noise, and/or a physiological reaction to situations reminiscent of the traumatic event. These physiological reactions may include an increase in blood pressure, a rapid heart rate or breathing, muscle tension, nausea and diarrhea.

What Causes Anxiety?

The human body is **programmed to sense and respond to danger and threats**. When presented with a new situation, the brain searches for a stored memory of the event so that it can reference how it should react.

If you have not experienced the situation before, and you have no stored memory for it, you are suddenly faced with the *unknown*, and your body reacts chemically by changing to what is known as flight or fight mode.

This occurs when a person most often experiences physical symptoms like a racing heart, sweaty palms and a dry mouth. There is often a change in breathing as well as a desire to **run away or avoid the situation somehow**.

If you have a stored memory for the event and it was a negative memory (such as being bitten by a snake), then upon entering a snake park, your brain will reference this memory and react accordingly, producing the physical signs of [anxiety](#).

These **physical symptoms are the body's healthy response** to a feared event, object or situation. They are caused by an increase in stress hormones which prepare the body physically to deal with a dangerous situation – to either escape it or to fight against it. The stress hormones (e.g. adrenalin) increase the heart rate to provide more oxygen to the muscles and the brain, and cause breathing to become faster to get the oxygen into the lungs.

When there is an actual dangerous situation, these symptoms are adaptive and can mean the difference between life and death! The problem arises when this *flight or fight* reaction of the body takes place when there is no actual danger – or when it is out of proportion to the actual situation that is occurring.

It is important to remember that **fear and anxiety are not the same**.

Fear is a direct, conscious response to a specific event or object. Most people will feel fear if someone points a loaded gun at them or if they see a tornado forming on the horizon. They also will recognize that they are afraid.

[Anxiety](#), on the other hand, is **often unfocused, vague, and hard to pin down to a specific cause**. This may be because the anxious individual is not consciously aware of the original source of the feeling. In this form, it is called free-

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floating [anxiety](#). An individual observing the anxious person from the outside may be truly puzzled as to the reason for the person's reaction. [Anxiety](#) is difficult to describe concretely because it has **so many different potential causes and degrees of intensity**.

It is also important to distinguish between [anxiety](#) as a feeling or experience, and an [anxiety disorder](#) as a diagnosed condition. A person may feel anxious without having an [anxiety disorder](#). Similarly, a person facing a clear and present danger or a realistic fear is not usually considered to be in a state of [anxiety](#).

Other Factors Associated with Anxiety

Learned Associations vs. Inherited Conditions

[Anxiety disorders](#) often run in families, possibly indicating that children may **learn unhealthy attitudes and behaviors from parents**, as well as healthy ones. Also, recurrent disorders in families **may indicate that there is a genetic or inherited factor in some [anxiety disorders](#)**.

For example, identical twins have a higher rate of panic disorders than in fraternal (non-identical) twins. A review of the available studies on [anxiety disorders](#) suggests that a **combination of environmental (learned) and inherited (genetic) factors exist** in the manifestation of [anxiety disorders](#). This makes some people more susceptible to developing an [anxiety disorder](#) than others – and environmental triggers (e.g. stress) can therefore more easily result in [anxiety](#) symptoms.

Medications and Substance Use

[Anxiety](#) symptoms **may occur as a side effect of certain medications**, including birth control pills, some thyroid or asthma drugs, some psychotropic agents, local anesthetics, corticosteroids, antihypertensive drugs, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Although people do not usually think of caffeine as a drug, it can cause [anxiety](#)-like symptoms when consumed in sufficient quantity. Patients who consume caffeine-rich foods and beverages (such as chocolate, cocoa, coffee, tea, or carbonated soft drinks - especially cola beverages), can sometimes lower their [anxiety](#) symptoms by simply reducing their intake of these substances.

Withdrawal from certain prescription drugs, primarily beta blockers and corticosteroids, as well as withdrawal from drugs of abuse-- including LSD, cocaine, alcohol, and opiates-- can also cause [anxiety](#). Many people who try to stop benzodiazepines (originally prescribed for [anxiety](#)) begin to experience [anxiety](#) symptoms when they stop their medication. This is often interpreted as meaning that they 'need' the medication, rather than as the withdrawal process from the drug itself.

Disease and Illness

[Anxiety](#) often **occurs as a symptom of other medical conditions**. Some of



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these diseases are disorders of the endocrine system (such as Cushing's syndrome), and include over or under activity of the thyroid gland. Other medical conditions that can produce [anxiety](#) include respiratory distress syndrome, mitral valve disorders, and chest pain caused by inadequate blood supply to the heart. Certain symptoms (e.g. vertigo) may even be caused by problems in the balance center of the inner ear. [Anxiety](#) may also be a symptom of other psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia.

When [anxiety](#) symptoms accompany the diagnosis of another disorder, then **treatment usually focuses on the primary diagnosis rather than the [anxiety](#) itself** – which is why it is important that a proper differential diagnosis be done. It makes no sense, for example, to treat [anxiety](#) caused by an overactive thyroid. While some minor relief may be experienced, the underlying cause remains untreated – meaning the problem will not resolve itself.

Social and Environmental Stress

People frequently report feelings of high [anxiety](#) when they anticipate and fear the loss of social approval or love. Another social stressor is prejudice. **People who belong to groups that are targets of bias are at higher risk for developing [anxiety disorders](#).** Some experts believe, for example, that the higher rates of phobias and panic disorders among women, reflects their greater social and economic vulnerability.

Some controversial studies indicate that the increase in violent or upsetting pictures and stories in news reports and entertainment may raise the [anxiety](#) level of many people. **Stress and [anxiety](#) management programs** often suggest that patients cut down their exposure to upsetting people, programs and events. This may be particularly relevant in the case of young children who develop problems with [anxiety](#).

[Anxiety](#) may also be **caused by environmental or occupational factors.** People who live or work around sudden or loud noises, bright or flashing lights, chemical vapors, or similar nuisances which they cannot avoid or control may develop heightened [anxiety](#) levels. This is because the stimuli they receive from their environment (e.g. loud noises) can put their system into a state of constant alertness.

Help for Anxiety

Not all patients with [anxiety](#) require treatment, but for more severe cases, treatment is recommended. The important thing to remember is that **[anxiety disorders](#) do respond well to treatment.**

There are several reasons why it is important for patients with severe [anxiety](#) symptoms to get help. **[Anxiety](#) doesn't always go away by itself!** It often progresses, and if left untreated, [anxiety disorders](#) may eventually lead to a diagnosis of major depression or interfere with an individual's education or ability to keep a job.

In addition, **many anxious patients develop addictions to drugs or alcohol** when they try to medicate their symptoms. Moreover, since children learn

ways of coping with [anxiety](#) from their parents, adults who get help for [anxiety disorders](#) are in a better position to help their families cope with factors that lead to [anxiety](#) than those who remain untreated.

Because [anxiety](#) **often has more than one cause** and is experienced in highly individual ways, its treatment usually requires more than one type of therapy. In addition, there is no way to tell in advance how patients will respond to a specific medication, remedy or therapy.

Sometimes health care professionals will **need to try different methods of treatment** before finding the best combination for the particular patient. It usually takes about six to eight weeks to evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment regimen.

Psychological Treatments for Anxiety

By contacting a psychologist, those who suffer from an [anxiety disorder](#) can take the first step on the road to recovery. Different psychologists use various approaches to the treatment of [anxiety](#), and it may take some time before identifying the most appropriate treatment(s) for the individual.

- **Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT):** Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) helps in changing the behaviors and thought processes of people with [anxiety disorders](#). The cognitive part of CBT involves changing the thinking patterns that keep the person from overcoming the fear. Someone with a panic disorder can learn to understand that they are not having a heart attack when they are having heart palpitations. **People are taught to identify the thoughts and situations that stimulate their [anxiety](#)**, and to view them more realistically. Over time, the individual is **helped to change maladaptive thought patterns** which contribute to the feelings of [anxiety](#). The behavioral part is meant to change the person's behavior by exposing that person to very thing they fear in manageable, gradual stages until they are desensitized to it. For instance, someone with obsessive compulsive disorder with a fear of germs may be encouraged by a therapist to go a certain amount of time without washing. Doing this repeatedly along with counseling from the therapist eventually helps decrease the [anxiety](#). Sometimes behavioral therapy is used without the component of cognitive therapy. This involves exposing the person to the object or situation that is feared. For these approaches to work, the patient must be ready (a therapist can help them decide if they are).
- **Psychotherapy:** Most people with [anxiety disorders](#) will be given some form of psychotherapy, sometimes accompanied by medication. Many people benefit from insight-oriented therapies, which are designed to **help them uncover unconscious battles** in order to understand how their symptoms developed in the first place. People who are extremely anxious may benefit from supportive psychotherapy, which aims at reducing the symptoms. It centers on the developmental aspects of [anxiety disorders](#) solely through talk therapy.
- **Behavioral therapies:** Behavioral therapies focus on using techniques such as guided imagery, relaxation training, progressive desensitization or flooding as means to reduce [anxiety](#) responses or eliminate specific phobias.
- **Relaxation training, sometimes called [anxiety management training](#)**, includes breathing exercises and similar techniques intended to

help the patient prevent hyperventilation and relieve the muscle tension associated with the fight-or-flight reaction. The person may also be given a CD to continue the relaxation training at home. Both CBT and relaxation training can be used in group therapy as well as individual treatment. In addition to CBT, support groups are often helpful to anxious patients, because they provide a social network and lessen the embarrassment that often accompanies [anxiety](#) symptoms.

- **Psychopharmacological treatments:** Medications are often prescribed to relieve the physical and psychological symptoms of [anxiety](#). Most drugs work by counteracting the biochemical and muscular changes involved in the fight-or-flight reaction. Some work directly on the chemicals in the brain that are thought to underlie the [anxiety](#).
- **Benzodiazepines:** (e.g. Klonopin, Ativan, Valium, Librium, Serax) can help to reduce the symptoms of an [anxiety disorder](#). However, if used long term, dependency may develop along with tolerance to the drug. With some benzodiazepines, dependency can develop very quickly – even after two or three weeks of use. Because of the development of tolerance to the drug, dosage might have to be increased over time in order to achieve the same effect. Once the person has become dependent on benzodiazepines, it can be difficult for them to stop taking it due to severe withdrawal symptoms. Benzodiazepine dependency is a major problem in the Western world, and the use of benzodiazepines for more than a week or two should be considered as a last resort only after all other interventions have failed. Remember that these drugs also increase the effects of alcohol and the two should never be taken in combination.
- **Serotonergic agents:** Newer antidepressants act as anti-[anxiety](#) agents as well. Unlike benzodiazepines which are faster acting, these drugs can take 4 to 6 weeks for full response. Examples are Luvox, Prozac, Zoloft and Paxil. Although manufacturers claim that they are not dependency-forming, withdrawal symptoms when discontinuing these medications are widely reported, along with other side effects like weight gain and loss of libido.
- **Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs):** These are older antidepressants with more side effects typically than the serotonergic agents. They may also take 4 to 6 weeks for full response. Examples include Tofranil, Elavil, Pamelor and Sinequan.
- **Combination serotonin/norepinephrine agents:** These include medications such as Effexor, Serzone, and Remeron. Response time is also 4 to 6 weeks.
- **Antihistamines:** Antihistamines, usually prescribed for allergies, were also used for mild to moderate [anxiety](#) for many years. These, like the benzodiazepines, work fairly quickly (Atarax, Vistaril), but may also cause drowsiness and other side effects.
- **Buspirone (BuSpar):** A new serotonergic combination agonist/antagonist. This medication claims to be non-addicting, but may take 2 to 4 weeks for full effect.
- **Major tranquilizers (also called neuroleptics):** These are medications that act on a variety of neurotransmitter systems (acetylcholine, dopamine, histamine, adrenergic). Most are somewhat sedating, and have been used in situations where [anxiety](#) is severe enough to cause disorganization of thoughts and abnormal physical and mental sensations, such as the sense that things around you aren't real or that you are disconnected with your body (derealization). Commonly used neuroleptics include: Zyprexa, Risperdal, Seroquel, Mellaril, Thorazine, Stelazine, Mogan, Navane, Prolixin, and Haldol.

Other medications

If you have been diagnosed with an [anxiety disorder](#), your healthcare professional may give you a beta-blocker for going into a situation where an attack may happen. The beta-blocker can keep your heart from pounding, your hands from shaking and other physical symptoms from developing.

Before taking medication for an [anxiety disorder](#):

- Ask your healthcare professional to tell you about the effects and side effects, as well as the risk of dependency. Do not allow yourself to be brushed off with simple reassurances that there will be no problems. If you do not receive the information you need from your doctor, seek a second opinion, do your own research on the internet, or ask your pharmacist for a package insert. While drug therapy can be helpful, especially in the short term, **many people later regret that they ever started it, finding themselves dependent on their medication** as well as having to use a range of drugs to cope with the side effects that may develop.
- Tell your healthcare professional about any alternative therapies or over-the-counter medications you are using.
- Ask your healthcare professional when and how the medication will be stopped. Some drugs have to be tapered slowly under a doctor's care.

Environmental Treatments for Anxiety

- **Avoidance or minimization of stimulants.** Do not ingest caffeine, minimize use of asthma medications if possible (bronchodilators, theophylline), and avoid use of nasal decongestants, some cough medications, and diet pills.
- **Avoid or decrease alcohol consumption.** While alcohol can help to relax you, it increases [anxiety](#) levels when it wears off.
- **Good sleep habits.** Getting adequate, restful sleep improves response to interventions to treat [anxiety disorders](#). Many people with [anxiety disorders](#) who cultivate good sleep habits find that their symptoms diminish significantly.
- **Reduction of stressors.** Identify and remove or reduce stressful tasks or situations at home, school and work.
- **Regular exercise** helps tremendously with stress and [anxiety](#) management and also increases the body's production of 'feel good' hormones, while reducing stress hormones such as adrenalin.

Alternative Treatments (Natural) for Anxiety

In today's modern world, daily stresses and a fast-paced lifestyle can take its toll. **Alternative treatments offer a natural alternative to prescription drugs** (that often have serious side effects and that may prove very costly).

[Natural remedies for anxiety](#) often provide benefits not available from conventional medicine, such as:

- Patient empowerment
- Alternative methods of pain management
- Treatment methods that support the systemic model of health

- Stress reduction services
- Other preventive health services that are not typically a part of conventional medicine

In alternative medicine, a **holistic approach to healing** recognizes that the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical elements of each person comprise a system that is greater than its individual parts. This approach attempts to **treat the whole person**, concentrating on the cause of the illness as well as symptoms.

Examples of such holistic therapies include acupuncture, Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, homeopathy, Indian head massage, naturopathic medicine, Qi Gong, Reiki, and reflexology. They usually do not originate from the Western allopathic medical-scientific tradition.

Holistic living may be defined as simple, spiritual, purposeful, peaceful and productive living with moderation in food intake, adequate exercise, and positive thinking and attitude to life. Holistic living is the art of **living in harmony with nature and concern to the whole universe** - using all that nature has to offer as a natural medicine chest!

Rather than treating problems in isolation, naturopaths prefer to take a holistic look at the individual and encompass a variety of factors to include diet, lifestyle, personality type, surroundings and emotional elements – thereby **supporting the health of the individual as a whole**.

Natural remedies have been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years to **support normal and efficient functioning of all the body systems**. In more recent times, research has confirmed this traditional wisdom. **Natural remedies for anxiety** can include herbs such as St. John's Wort. Clinical studies have demonstrated that this herb can be just as effective as prescription drugs, without the side effects.

Most conventional doctors are not trained in the use of alternative medicine and therefore do not encourage their patients to give it a trial-- meaning that the only option they provide for the patient remains drug therapy. However, some conventional doctors, recognizing the benefits to their patients, have begun to inform themselves about natural remedies, and many are now helping their patients to seek alternatives to the prescription drugs.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a branch of naturopathy that originated in the East and has a long and esteemed history. **Anxiety** is seen as a symptom of a systemic disorder, and Chinese medicine regards **anxiety** as a blockage of qi, or vital force, inside the patient's body. The practitioner of Chinese medicine chooses acupuncture point locations and/or herbal therapy to move the qi and rebalance the entire system in relation to the lungs and large intestine.

Although malpractices on the part of some unscrupulous individuals has resulted in Chinese medicine falling into disrepute in some quarters, it is important to note that this ancient system of medicine has a **long and reputable history and can be very helpful when correctly applied**. Make sure that you buy Chinese medicinal herbs from reputable sources and companies.

Homeopathic practitioners select a remedy based on other associated symptoms and the patient's general constitution and personality type.

Homeopathy is a medical approach which operates on the principle of 'Like treats Like', using minute amounts of certain substances, prepared in a very unique way, to stimulate the body's own healing forces.

Homeopathy can be very helpful in the treatment of [anxiety disorders](#). Because the medicines used in homeopathy are present in such small quantities using special methods of manufacturing these medications, side effects are almost unheard of and there is no risk of dependency.

Herbalists may use medicinal herbs from a range of countries, drawing on the natural medicine knowledge of indigenous people from India (Ayurvedic medicine), America, Africa, Australia and Europe. Many of these remedies come with thousands of years of traditional use. Once again, it is always important to **source natural remedies from reputable companies** who also offer backup and support to their customers.

Other holistic interventions may often be useful along with either conventional drugs or natural remedies. For example, meditation and mindfulness training have been found to be beneficial to individuals with phobias and panic disorder. Hydrotherapy is useful to some anxious patients because it promotes general relaxation of the nervous system. Yoga, aikido, t'ai chi, and dance therapy help people work with the physical, as well as the emotional, tensions that either promote [anxiety](#) or are created by the [anxiety](#).

Learning to Manage Anxiety

Talking with friends or someone from your religious or spiritual community also can help, although this is **not a substitute for mental health care**. The family is very important in the recovery of an [anxiety disorder](#). Families should be supportive. If family members tend to trivialize the disorder or demand improvement without treatment, individuals suffering from [anxiety](#) and the related disorders may experience worse [anxiety attack symptoms](#).

Managing stress and practicing meditation may help calm you and enhance treatment. Early research says heart-pumping exercise such as brisk walking or running may help. Caffeine, illegal drugs, and even some over-the-counter cold medications can worsen an [anxiety disorder](#).

Recovery

Recovery depends on a number of factors such as:

- The specific disorder
- The severity of [anxiety attack symptoms](#)
- The specific causes of the [anxiety](#)
- The person's degree of control over these causes
- The patient's age, sex, general health, living situation, belief system, social support network, and responses to different medications and forms of therapy

Remember! According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, 90 percent of people with emotional illnesses will improve or recover if they receive adequate treatment.

How to Avoid Feeling Anxious

A number of techniques may help manage [anxiety attack symptoms](#), such as:

- Relaxation techniques (meditation, listening to soothing music or having a hot aromatherapy foam bath)
- Breathing exercises
- Distraction (putting the [anxiety](#) out of one's mind by focusing thoughts on something else)

As humans, **we have significant control over thoughts**, and therefore, we can try to re-program our minds and learn ways of preventing [anxiety](#) by changing irrational ideas and beliefs.

Self-Help Tips

- Picture yourself confronting your fears. Figure out what scares you and learn to respond differently.
- Change your attitude. Remind yourself that you are in control.
- Learn calming techniques.
- Practice. Place yourself in smaller, more manageable social situations.
- Tell people that you're nervous. This can help put you and others at ease.
- Read as much as you can about [anxiety](#) and ways of helping yourself. There are many excellent books written by professionals containing a wealth of information that can help you. Knowledge is power!

Different Types of Anxiety Disorders

There are many types of [anxiety disorders](#) in the adult population. They can be sorted under the following headings:

- Panic disorders
- Phobias (and social phobia)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Stress disorders, e.g. post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Generalized [anxiety disorder](#) (GAD)
- [Anxiety disorders](#) due to known physical causes (general medical conditions or substance abuse)

Supporting an Anxious Family Member

Family support is important to the recovery process. Like any other illness, [anxiety disorders](#) can take a toll on the family and friends of the sufferer.

Sufferers of [anxiety disorders](#) and their families may spend months, even years, without knowing what is wrong or how they can help the family member suffering from [anxiety](#).

Household routines are disrupted, sometimes special plans or allowances need to be made, and the person with the disorder may be reluctant to participate in typical social activities. This can be very frustrating and can put an enormous

amount of strain on relationships.

These factors can all have a negative impact on family dynamics. Family members should learn as much as they can about the disorder, which will help them know what to expect from the illness and from the sometimes long recovery process.

Family members should also learn when to be patient with the sufferer and when to push or encourage them to do things that they may be avoiding due to the [anxiety](#).

Family members often want to help the sufferer, but do not know how. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

- [Anxiety disorders](#) are real, serious, but treatable medical conditions
- Having one is not a sign of weakness or lack of moral character
- There is reliable evidence linking panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and other [anxiety disorders](#) to brain chemistry
- Life events can trigger the onset of an [anxiety disorder](#) in a person who is genetically predisposed

Some things family members can do to help a loved one diagnosed with an [anxiety disorder](#) are:

- Learn about the disorder
- Recognize and praise small accomplishments
- Modify expectations during stressful periods
- Measure progress on the basis of individual improvement, not against some absolute standard
- Be flexible and try to maintain a normal routine

It is also important for family members to keep in mind that the recovery process is stressful for them, too. They should build a support network of relatives and friends for themselves. Remember that with proper treatment most [anxiety disorders](#) can be overcome!

[Anxiety](#) can also affect children. Childhood [anxiety](#) may arise for different reasons, but should never be viewed lightly. A child or teen may not know how to put feelings of [anxiety](#) or inner turmoil into words.

They may be scared of the dark, being bullied at school, or it could have a more serious origin. The root cause should be found as soon as possible and appropriate treatment implemented. **Many safe and all-natural herbal remedies can be effective in treating childhood [anxiety](#) with no side effects.**

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, **homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used** even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors, and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the **broad range of treatment options and approaches** that are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. Holistic medicine encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to **support health, relieve symptoms, and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "...more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which **strives to support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction, and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs.

Contrary to common perception-- and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way-- **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**. In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety**. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that like any medicine, **herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer the benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper production lines), they have grave disadvantages, including an increase in side effects-- as the **medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties** of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the **Full Spectrum Method of extraction**, which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a **more complete treatment** as well as **superior protection against side effects**.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. **Research what is best for you**. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will **support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health**.

Related Natural Remedies:

PureCalm: Aids nervous system in stress resistance for balanced moods and feelings of well-being.

PureCalm is a 100% safe, non-addictive herbal remedy that has been specially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and children.

PureCalm can be used to safely **maintain harmony, health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system**, without harmful side effects and without sedatives. This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their supportive function in maintaining brain.

PureCalm can especially benefit those individuals needing support overcoming worry, managing stress and to promote inner calm related to certain situations. Natural stress relief products such as PureCalm can be used consistently, without side effects or compromising health.

[Learn more about PureCalm](#)

MindSoothe: Promote balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing.

MindSoothe is a 100% safe, non-addictive, natural herbal remedy that has been especially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and teens, and comes in a compact capsule form, making it easy to take.

MindSoothe can be used to **safely maintain emotional health, balanced mood and systemic harmony in the brain and nervous system**, without harmful side effects.

This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their calming and supportive function in maintaining brain and nervous system health, emotional balance and overall wellbeing.

[Learn more about MindSoothe](#)

Nerve Tonic: Promotes nervous system health, maintains balanced mood and worry free mind.

Triple Complex Nerve Tonic is a combination of three, cell-supporting tissue salts, especially selected for their effect on brain and nervous system health. This combination of tissue salts can be used regularly in a general capacity to **promote systemic balance in the brain**, spinal cord and the entire nervous system, as well as in conjunction with other remedies to maintain therapeutic effectiveness.

Tissue salts, also called cell salts or biochemic salts, are composed of **minerals that occur naturally at a cellular level in our bodies** and all organic matter on earth (plants, rocks and soil).

There have been **twelve essential tissue salts** identified as important components of all body cells and without which, true health is not possible. Each tissue salt plays a different, yet vital role in maintaining cellular health in the organs and **nervous systems** of the body.

Ensuring the healthy functioning of all brain and nervous system cells enhances the bio-availability of supplements, remedies and even nutrients in your diet. It also lessens the chance of a **nervous breakdown**. **Treating panic disorder** in people who suffer a **nervous breakdown** usually involves therapy. The doctor **treating panic disorder** will monitor the symptoms carefully to establish a treatment plan that aims to restore the health of the **nervous system**.

And, because our tissue salts are naturally occurring in the body and manufactured to ensure safe, yet optimum potency, they are safe to use for all ages, as well as during pregnancy.

[Learn more about Nerve Tonic](#)

Read the testimonials for these quality products [here!](#)

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Alternative Healing Academy

[Advanced Color/Crystal Reflexology Practitioner](#) | [Basic Anatomy & Physiology](#) | [Basic Reflexology Practitioner](#)
[Basic Aromatherapy Practitioner](#) | [Advanced Reflexology Practitioner](#) | [Advanced Aromatherapy Practitioner](#)
[Basic Color/Crystal Therapy Practitioner](#) | [Mini Courses](#) | [Advanced ReflexAromatherapy Practitioner](#)

With the increasing popularity of aromatherapy, reflexology, color & crystal therapy and a return to a more holistic lifestyle, people have begun searching for ways to earn more money; expand their skills; improve the health of themselves, friends & family; and increase their knowledge of alternative medicine.

The Alternative Healing Academy has developed several new courses in the holistic health care field for those who would like the opportunity to learn a healing modality at their own pace and in their own homes.

A Doctor of Reflexology with The Alternative Healing Academy is teaching classes with curriculum very similar to the Reflexology Practitioner Course and the Basic Aromatherapy at her local community college.

Our holistic health courses were developed by professionals in the Holistic Health Care field trained in the following modalities: Aromatherapy, Advanced/Master Aromatherapy, Reiki, Tuning Fork Therapy, Color and Crystal Therapy, Homeopathy, Herbalism, and Advanced Reflexology.

Furthermore, since we at the Alternative Healing Academy also realize that not everyone wants to make alternative medicine a career choice, we also offer [basic courses](#) as well as several [Mini Courses](#) which will teach you the skills you need to help improve the health and quality of life for yourself, your family and your friends.

[Check out our Affordable Payment Plans!](#)



All graduates of an Alternative Healing Academy home study course will receive a 20% discount off [AHHA Practitioner Membership](#) if they meet qualifying criteria and join within six months of their graduation date.

About Our Courses

Would you like to learn accurate, detailed aromatherapy, reflexology and/or color & crystal therapy information at your own pace in the comfort of your home? Would you like to become certified in Reflexology, Aromatherapy or Color and Crystal Therapy? An Alternative Healing Academy Distance Learning Course could be what you're looking for...

If you own or work for one of the following:

Natural Foods Store, Aromatherapy Store,
New Age Retail Store, Gift Shop, Herb Store,

Aromatherapy Manufacturer,
Massage Center, Holistic Center, Day Spa, or any type of Salon

If you are a practitioner:

Massage Therapist, Esthetician, Chiropractor, Nurse, Herbalist,
Acupuncturist, Bach Flower Therapist, Body Worker, Reiki,
Doula, Midwife, Energy Worker

If you are interested in personal development or improving the health of yourself and your family - these courses are also for you!

[Advanced Color/Crystal Reflexology Practitioner](#) | [Basic Anatomy & Physiology](#) | [Basic Reflexology Practitioner](#)
[Basic Aromatherapy Practitioner](#) | [Advanced Reflexology Practitioner](#) | [Advanced Aromatherapy Practitioner](#)
[Basic Color/Crystal Therapy Practitioner](#) | [Mini Courses](#) | [Advanced ReflexAromatherapy Practitioner](#)

Common Questions Asked About Holistic Health Distance Learning Courses:

What is Certification?



Most schools will offer an exam that tests the student's knowledge of the material taught in the respective course. Upon successful completion of this exam, a Certificate or Diploma will be issued by the school attesting that the student has successfully met the requirements as specified by that school. The only governmental recognition of Aromatherapy in North America is the occupational title designation granted to the BCAA under the Societies Act of British Columbia.

What is a Certified Aromatherapist or Reflexologist?

Most prospective students want to know whether taking our courses will lead to their becoming 'Certified' in that healing modality, thereby leading to the title of Certified Aromatherapist, Certified Reflexologist or Certified Color/Crystal Therapist. The answer to this really depends on what you mean by 'Certified.' We believe it can be misleading to purport that completing a course in a healing modality such as reflexology, aromatherapy or color/crystal therapy will lead to a designation of 'Certified' Therapist. These are not official

title designations nor are they ones which are recognized by any country's governmental body. All that these titles mean is that this is what an Individual Instructor, School or Institution decided to put on the Diploma it awards those who successfully complete their course.

What is an accredited course in Aromatherapy or Reflexology?

The answer to this will depend on who you are asking. At the present time, British Columbia is the only government to recognize Aromatherapy as a distinct profession and has granted Occupational Title Protection to the members of the BCAA (British Columbia Alliance of Aromatherapy) with the exclusive right for its members to call themselves Registered Aromatherapists (R.A.).

At this time, neither Reflexology nor Color/Crystal Therapy have such occupational designations in any country although one prominent Reflexology school in Colorado, The Modern Institute of Reflexology, has gained occupational designation for their institution in that state. MIR has been designated by the Colorado State Division of Private Occupational Schools - Dept. of Higher Education as an approved school. Our Reflexologist who developed the reflexology modules for our courses was trained at MIR as a Certified Reflexologist, a Master Reflexologist and a Dr. of Reflexology.

In the United States, the NAHA (National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy) has put into place their Approved Standards for Aromatherapy Training. The Alternative Healing Academy's Advanced Aromatherapy course meets and exceeds these standards and we are in the application process of becoming an approved program through the NAHA.

In Canada, there are a number of different Associations including the BCAPA (British Columbia Association of Practicing Aromatherapists) and the CFA (Canadian Federation of Aromatherapists). Time will tell if one authoritative body or association becomes the standard by which to judge and govern the educational offerings of these alternative healing modalities.

It has to be noted that NO form of aromatherapy "certification" is currently recognized in the USA by anyone other than those in the trade, nor is aromatherapy (or essential oils in the aromatherapy trade) regulated by any governmental body.

Some information about the courses we offer:

1) You can receive the course in one of two ways: A cd with the modules and tests in PDF format can be shipped to you; or, The modules can be emailed to you three at a time. Each time you complete the tests for the current three modules, a new set of three modules will be emailed to you.

2) All modules are clearly explained, are in pdf format and fully

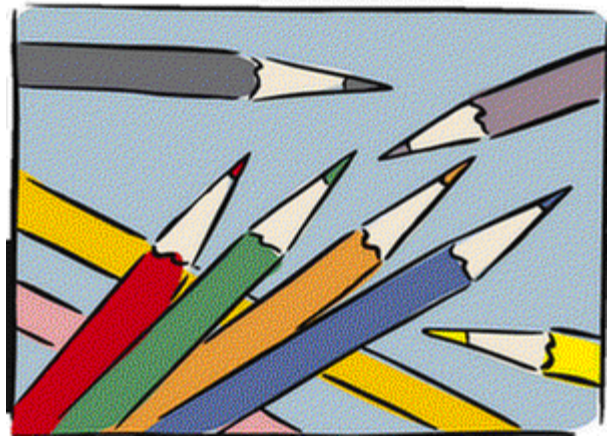
illustrated.

3) The Advanced Aromatherapy Practitioner and the Advanced Reflexology Practitioner courses are designed to meet the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) guidelines.

4) A tutor will be available via email to answer any questions you may have.

You will be contacted after purchase to find out how you would like your course delivered. All tests for the course can be either emailed or snail-mailed to The Alternative Healing Academy.

Upon successful completion of any full diploma or certification course (with a score of 80% or higher), you will receive a beautiful Diploma, suitable for framing.



Course Testimonials

"I'm done! Going through the final and the case studies and having such amazing experiences and opportunities to help people, I truly feel blessed and honored to have had the intense education that came with this course. I discovered in me a new ability to serve others, not only through education but through the power of healing that comes with the use of essential oils. I am continuing to train personally with Alexandria Brighton and have begun work toward opening an aromatherapy practice. Thank you so much for your patience and knowledge. Most of all thank you for this new way of living and enjoying Life."

-A. Lindquist - Advanced Aromatherapy Practitioner

"I am finding the course great. It is written very well so even people like me can understand the human body a whole lot better. I just hope that I can remember it all. I don't think I have a chance of remembering the names of everything in the muscular system or the movement system. But, I do have more of an understanding of how everything works now. I find it just amazing. Thanks Heaps."

-M. Oliver - Basic Anatomy & Physiology

"This information is great that you are teaching. I would really like to talk my oldest daughter into taking your course. It really goes into detail which is very informative."

-Debbie F. - Basic Reflexology

"Seven years ago I started to see a reflexologist for migraines and sinus problems. I was amazed that I finally found relief without medication. I decided this year to search out a course in reflexology so I could help family and friends and show them the benefits of reflexology. I researched various courses on the internet and decided to go with the basic course through the Alternative Healing Academy. I was impressed with course material and the ease of receiving the course material."

"I was given an choice of having a CD sent to me or to receiving and sending back the assignments through email. I choose email. I received 3 lessons at a time that I could read and study on my own time frame and return the lessons when I was done. Everything was sent in a very timely manner and communication was open and quick. If I needed help, I knew it was only a click away and the response time was very quick. The techniques used also came in a video mode in the email that I could replay as much as I needed to."

"I felt I learned a lot and am able to help myself and others. Being able to log 20 hours of treatment time and writing the case histories for the final exam was extremely rewarding and helpful. I would recommend this course to others interested in reflexology because the course material was very informative and complete and written in easy to understand language."

-Jean Russell - Basic Reflexology Course

"I'm so excited about (the Advanced Aromatherapy course) and I'm particularly excited about the possibility of making custom blends for people! I hadn't anticipated having that opportunity when I took the course so I'm excited to have everything done! I'm very excited to have finished. I really enjoyed this course and really appreciate all the work you've put into it! This has been a fabulous jumping off point for me and I'm so glad I took it."

"p.s. I know the boys are much slower at the Reflexology, but my son is loving the classes."

-Megan P. - Advanced Aromatherapy Course

Our Associations

Organizational Member of the American Holistic Health Association - <http://www.ahha.org/>

Professional & Business Member of the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapy - <http://www.naha.org/>

Professional Member of the International Reflexology Association - <http://www.holisticbenefits.com/ima/international-reflexology-association.html>

Professional Member of the International Aromatherapy Association - <http://www.internationalaromatherapyassociation.com/>

Payment plans are available, please [Click Here for More Info](#)

Sales & Refund Policy

We will, within 30 days, refund the purchase price of any course you purchased ***MINUS* the cost of the modules you have already received**. This policy does ***NOT*** apply to our informational Mini Courses. Please see the [Mini Courses page](#) for more information on those. Please [email support](#) if you wish to be refunded or have questions about our refund policy.