



Simple changes in lifestyle and nutrition can have significant benefits on mood.

People get diet advice from physicians if suffering from heart disease or diabetes but almost never get nutritional advice when it comes to with mental health.

It amazes me that even the simplest thing like avoiding caffeine is frequently not mentioned by doctors when someone presents with anxiety.

This is a review of the book [The Anti-Anxiety Foods Solution](#) by Trudy Scott. Scott's book adds an important contribution to the role of nutrition in helping ease anxiety.

The main focus of the book is to get people to return to a whole food diet. That is a diet of vegetables, fruit, fish, whole grains and grass fed beef. (As opposed to the western diet of refined and process food that high in sugars). There are numerous studies to show that people who follow a whole food diet are less likely to suffer from poor mental health.

As expected, the things to avoid mentioned in this book are things you have heard me speak about on several occasions. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and anything high in sugar in general.

Scott emphasizes the importance of controlling sugar intake as sugar swings can cause high levels of the stress hormone cortisol to be released. Watching sugar intake is particularly relevant for people who feel shaky between meals.

As to be expected Scott recommends calcium, magnesium, B vitamins and omega oils as a good supplement base. Nothing new there and it's information already covered in DARE but she goes into quite a bit of detail on amino acids that can help reduce anxiety.

Some of the amino acids that she recommends are GABA, 5 HTP, DPA, Tyrosine and Glutamine.

In the book she has a questionnaire, (which I have reproduced here below) to help you identify which amino acid might be best for you.

Before doing the questionnaire, listen to the interview Trudy did for the Anxiety summit [here](#) so that you get a better sense of the whole approach.

Important: The amino acids recommended in the book are meant to be used short term as you move to a more whole food diet. If you do want to start supplementing with amino acids, get the book *The Anti-Anxiety Foods Solution* and follow the instructions there.

Questionnaire to help indicate the appropriate amino acid to take from the book

[The Anti-Anxiety Foods Solution](#)

1 Low Blood Sugar?

*If you check off **three or more** of the following symptoms **Glutamine** may help alleviate your symptoms.*

- Crave sugar, starch or alcohol any time during the day
- Irritable, shaky, headachey – especially if too long between meals
- Intense cravings for sweets
- Lightheaded if meals are missed
- Eating relieves fatigue
- Agitated, easily upset, nervous

2 Low GABA?

*If you check off **three or more** of the following symptoms **GABA** may help alleviate your symptoms.*

- Anxiety and feeling overwhelmed or stressed
- Feeling worried or fearful
- Panic attacks
- Unable to relax or loosen up
- Stiff or tense muscles
- Feeling stressed and burned-out
- Craving carbs, alcohol, or drugs for relaxation and calming

3 Low Serotonin?

If you check off **six or more** of the following symptoms, **5HTP** may help alleviate your symptoms.

- Anxiety
- Panic attacks or phobias
- Feeling worried or fearful
- Obsessive thoughts or behaviors
- Perfectionism or being overly controlling
- Irritability
- Anxiety that's worse in winter
- Winter blues or seasonal affective disorder
- Negativity or depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Excessive self-criticism
- Low self-esteem and poor self-confidence
- PMS or menopausal mood swings
- Sensitivity to hot weather
- Hyperactivity
- Anger or rage
- Digestive issues
- Fibromyalgia, temporomandibular joint syndrome, or other pain syndromes
- Difficulty getting to sleep
- Insomnia or disturbed sleep
- Afternoon or evening cravings for carbs, alcohol or drugs

4 Low Endorphins?

If you check off **three or more** of the following symptoms, ***D-Phenylalanine (DPA)*** may help alleviate your symptoms.

- Heightened sensitivity to emotional pain
- Heightened sensitivity to physical pain
- Crying or tearing up easily
- Eating to soothe your mood, or comfort eating
- Really, really *loving* certain foods, behaviors, drugs, or alcohol
- Craving a reward or numbing treat

5 Low Catecholamines?

*If you check off **three or more** of the following symptoms **Tyrosine** may help alleviate your symptoms.*

- Depression and apathy
- Easily bored
- Lack of energy
- Lack of focus
- Lack of drive and low motivation
- Attention deficit disorder
- Procrastination and indecisiveness
- Craving carbs, alcohol, caffeine, or drugs for energy

End note: As always when taking any nutritional advice if you are taking medication or are pregnant/breastfeeding, consult your doctor before taking any supplements.

Certain amino acids like 5HTP should not be taken if you are taking and SSRI medication.

The only point I disagree with that Trudy Scott raises is that it's better to eat meat based diet to help sustain a balanced mood. I think that if vegetarians supplement and ensure to eat a balanced diet they need not be more prone to mental health issues than meat eaters.

See: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/vegetarian-diet/art-20046446?pg=2>