



"I think pot should be legal. I don't smoke it, but I like the smell of it."

~ Andy Warhol

WELCOME TO A NEW WORLD IN HEALTH CARE.

Its August, the air is hot and the sun is out. The great outdoors is calling and we are all wanting to be outside in the bright sun or at the beach just relaxing.

This month in our MMJPR newsletter we are bringing you some healthy tips on fighting anxiety as well as some useful tips on eating our super food of the month - Leafy Greens!



Alleviating Anxiety

11 Little-Known Ways to Deal with Anxiety

Ask your doctor for this blood test for anxiety. We've always said how great it would be if there were a simple blood test to diagnose mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Now there is, at least for anxiety. A blood test to measure levels of the protein acetylcholinesterase, a chemical you release when you're under stress, and the enzymes butyrylcholinesterase (BChE) and paraoxonase (PON), accurately predicted the presence of an anxiety disorder 90 percent of the time in Israeli trials.

Although the researchers hope to have a commercial test for these chemicals on the market soon, your doctor can order the test through a hospital or specialty laboratory.

Avoid the stress of telling lies. Pinocchio learned well: No good can come from lying. Not to mention it increases levels of stress hormones that, over time, can cause lasting harm. Don't believe us? How do you think polygraph tests work? By picking up on your body's response to stress, such as increased blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate. The stress response is so strong that researchers are developing a "sniffer test" to measure stress hormone levels on your breath.

Learn the calming effect of breath control. You know how when you're anxious, your heart beats like a locomotive coming full speed up the tracks and try as you might you can't seem to get enough oxygen in your lungs? Forget the old breathe-in-a-paper-bag trick. Instead, try this the next time you feel the beginnings of that anxious feeling, says a professor of psychology and a licensed clinical psychologist:

- Lie on the floor and place your hand on your chest and try and reduce the amount of movement, while continuing to breathe normally. You need to breathe for five minutes and allow your hand to feel the breathing. But you don't want your chest to move, you want the other parts of your body to take over the breathing—using your diaphragm, instead of the big chest inhalation and exhalation.
- Make yourself aware of your breathing in non-stress situations, such as reading, or watching television.
- Try to employ the breathing you experience in non-stress situations in more stressful situations—such as traffic jams, or conflicts with the kids. Use the power of getting yourself more focused and relaxed.
- Develop this non-stress type of breathing as your sustained way of life. Make it your normal way of breathing.
- Be aware that chest breathing still has a purpose, but only as a point of context. It should only be used in periods of extreme emotional arousal—like running away or fighting.



Try an antibiotic to cut fear of public speaking. Given the growing problem of antibiotic resistance, getting your doctor to prescribe one is getting as difficult as convincing an accountant to take a week off in April. But here's one reason to prescribe the drug: to help you get over socially related anxiety quicker. This type of anxiety hits when you have to do something in public, like give a speech. When researchers from Emory University gave 13 patients undergoing therapy for their anxiety the antibiotic D-cycloserine (DCS) and compared them to a similar group undergoing therapy but not getting the drug, they found those getting the antibiotic learned to overcome their social fears quicker. D-cycloserine is typically used to treat tuberculosis, but studies find it can also enhance learning, which may be why it helped, the researchers speculate.

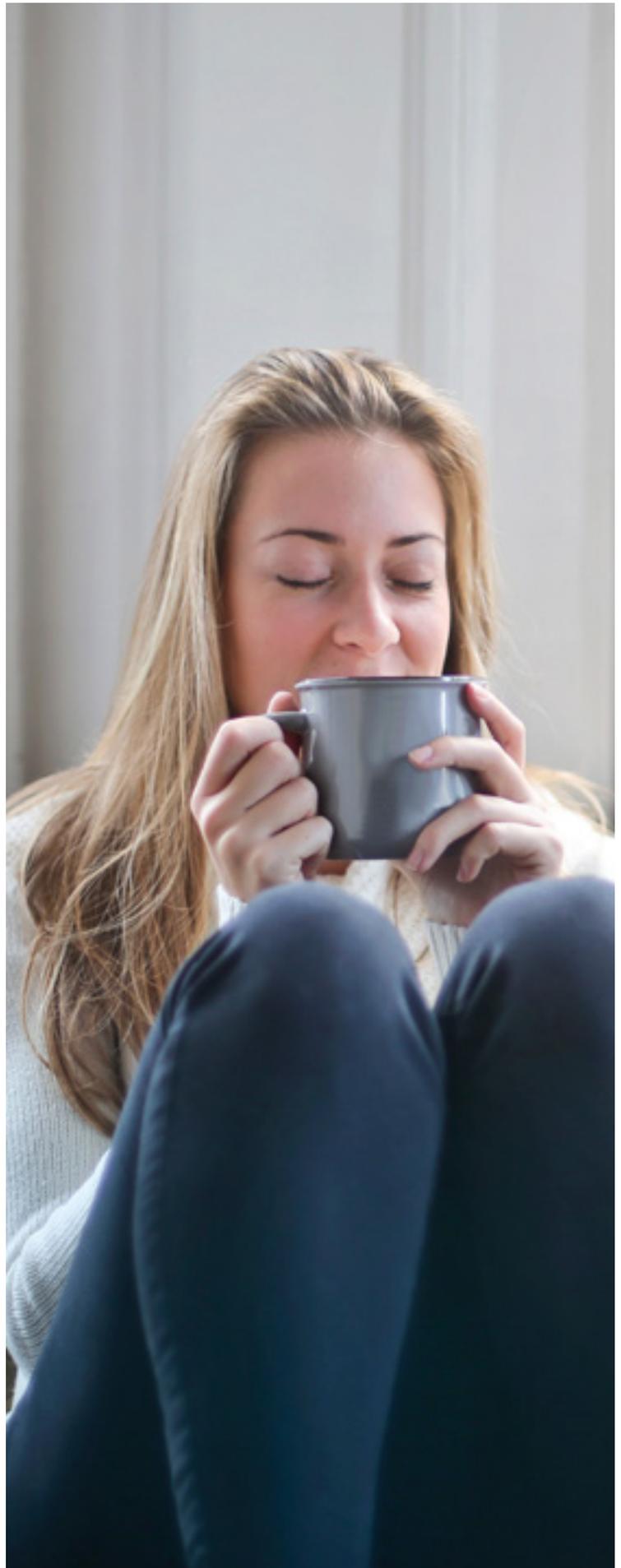
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Education Supporter

Quit the caffeine to reduce jitters. We have one question for you: If you have a tendency to get anxious, and you know that coffee and other highly caffeinated beverages and foods make people jittery, then what are you doing with a Starbucks card? Seriously, quit the caffeine. It blocks the calming effects of the brain chemical adenosine, which usually helps promote calmness and sleepiness. And you don't have to chug it all at once to get these effects; one study found drinking the equivalent of two cups of coffee over five hours could make you as jittery and anxious as if you'd chugged two cups of coffee all at once.

Pop some sunflower seeds to lower anxiety. You've got a big speech to deliver tomorrow and already you can feel your palms sweating and heart racing. Munch on sunflower seeds for a few hours before the presentation. Why? Because low levels of magnesium contribute to anxiety. Anxiety, in turn, depletes your body of magnesium as a result of the fight-or-flight response. But magnesium-rich sunflower seeds can break this vicious cycle. One more thing: Before you go to bed tonight and first thing in the morning, take 200 milligrams of this valuable mineral.

Watch some funny movies to bust stress. Yes, line up an Adam Sandler marathon, the complete works of The Three Stooges, and a couple of seasons of Seinfeld. Then every day you'll have something funny to look forward to. That in itself is enough to boost stress-busting hormones like endorphins and growth hormones, and drop stress-inducing hormones like cortisol and epinephrine, according to a University of California-Irvine College of Medicine study. Researchers there tested 16 men, half of whom knew they were going to watch a funny video three days before they did. The ones who knew the yucks were coming had huge decreases in stress-inducing hormones and increases in relaxation-enhancing hormones even before watching the film. Those who didn't get to see the movie had no changes.



Bang on a drum to relieve stress. It might sound a little New Age, but drumming—yeah, beating on a drum with a group of people—is a great way to relieve stress (especially if you picture your boss’s head as the drum). Researchers at Meadville Medical Center in Pennsylvania compared 50 people who either participated in a drumming circle or just listened to drumming and found the drummers had much lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and much higher levels of immune-enhancing chemicals called natural killer cells. You can find a drumming circle in your area by looking in the newspaper or checking with an alternative health centre or practitioner.

Create a space where you can cool out. Paint the room a calming light blue or green. Add a scented candle designed to help relax you, such as lavender, lights on a dimmer switch, and a comfortable chair with a soft throw. This is your relaxing room, a place you can go when you need to calm down—after work, for instance. The colors are important because they’ve been shown to help people feel calm and relax.

Become an art lover to cut stress. You could start attending art auctions, visit a museum, or simply frame and hang your kids’ pictures on your walls. Regardless, studies find that viewing works of art, no matter how much they’re worth monetarily, can reduce stress hormones! Another option: Make your own art. Any kind of creative activity like painting or drawing also reduces stress hormones. Just say no to stressful demands. Repeat after me: “No, I cannot serve on the bake sale committee.” “No, I do not want to spend every night and weekend driving vast distances to take my child to elite soccer games.” “No, I cannot loan you the money for a new car ... allow you to move back home ... take on the fired employee’s job.” Yeah, it sounds simple, but most of us have no clue how to say the “n” word without feeling guilty; and if you’re feeling guilty, what’s the point?



Spinach and Other Leafy Greens

That's to greenhouses we are lucky these days to go to our local green grocer and pick up a variety of leafy greens all year long, such as the amazing Kale plant, or beet greens, to a variety of lettuces and let's not forget: Spinach!

What's In Them

Beta-carotene: Beta-carotene may help to protect against cancer and macular degeneration. Of all the greens, kale has the most: One cup provides a healthy 72 percent of your daily recommended intake.

Chlorophyll: Dark leafy greens contain a heaping dose of this plant pigment, which helps to block the damaging changes that convert healthy cells to precancerous cells.

Folate: Two cups of raw spinach provide 116 mcg of folate—almost a third of your daily requirement for this B vitamin, which helps protect against anemia, birth defects and possibly heart attacks.

Lutein and zeaxanthin: Spinach, kale and collard greens are rich sources of these two carotenoids, which may work together to help prevent macular degeneration and possibly cataracts and colon cancer.

Oxalates: Oxalates inhibit the absorption of calcium and iron from spinach. Spinach and other foods high in oxalates are not recommended for people with gout and certain types of kidney stones—consult your doctor if you suffer from them.



Plant sterols: Researchers believe these plant substances may help to prevent cancer and high cholesterol.

Vitamin C: This antioxidant vitamin may help to prevent macular degeneration, osteoarthritis and strokes.

Try this!

Make some fabulous bruschetta, but swap out the tomatoes for greens: Finely chop cooking greens and sauté with garlic in olive oil until they're melt-in-your-mouth tender. Then use as a topping for thick slices of toasted Italian bread. Yummy!

