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Wondering about these two words: theanine anxiety?

As is typical, I will discuss another natural thing shown to be of benefit to those suffering from anxiety, panic attacks and agoraphobia: Green Tea.

Green tea is full of antioxidants and is a great wellness drink but there is more evidence coming forward in the scientific community demonstrating that another substance in green tea called L-Theanine can improve cognitive skills and help with relaxation and reduce stress, both mental and physical.

L-Theanine is not an antioxidant but an amino acid.

Here are just some of the benefits*:

- Have a calming effect
- Protect and restore the brain
- Stimulate the immune system, and even make cancer chemotherapy more effective with fewer side effects.
- Induce deep states of relaxation without sedation
- Relieve some PMS and menopausal symptoms
- Increase focused attention and improve learning
- Relieve nicotine addiction
- Prevents jitters caused by caffeine (while increasing mental clarity)
- Promote sleep

L-Theanine is said to have the relaxing effect without making one feel drowsy so this would certainly be preferable.

You would, however, probably have to drink at least 5 cups of green tea to get the minimum dosage to feel the effects of L-Theanine but what you could consider doing, if you'd like to give this a try, is to drink green tea and supplement it with a supplement containing green tea extract.

Another idea is to purchase a green drink, which is a health drink that can have many benefits for your body, containing adequate amounts of green tea extract. This should all be listed on the label.

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As is typical, I now will look at a question/comment from a subscriber to the Panic Attack Recovery Newsletter. So here we go:

Question: *“Is there such a thing as a "chemical imbalance"? The term may not be right but I wanted to know if there is something that went wrong in our brains; something misfiring? Or did we all sort of "think" ourselves into these irrational responses to perceived threats of danger?”*

Answer:

It depends who you speak to about this matter.

If you go to your family doctor, he/she will likely tell you that you're suffering from a chemical imbalance. Doctors use a biological model to explain what is going on. For example some may use the model of a physical disease (for example heart disease) and apply it to anxiety. The problem is this model does not necessarily apply.

Alternatively, if you see a psychologist he/she will likely recommend treatment with psychotherapy (talk therapy).

Chemical imbalances have been promoted heavily by doctors and pharmaceutical companies but many leading scientists are no longer subscribing to the school of thought on chemical imbalances

However some interesting studies have been completed with some interesting findings in this regard and I will list a few key points below.

Some research has found that when serotonin levels are boosted using something natural like tryptophan, mood is not improved.

Why is this significant?

Well the common antidepressants for anxiety and panic attacks, SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) are said to work by maintaining/boosting or serotonin levels or otherwise influencing serotonin. But the above findings suggest that serotonin is not the answer.

It is thought by some that the placebo effect is at work when one improves from using these medications.

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The placebo effect happens when someone takes a medication for anxiety and his/her condition improves although not because the medication is working exactly as it is supposed to do but because for some reason it makes us feel better.

Sugar pills used to be sometimes prescribed by doctors when they would see patients they determined to be hypochondriacs (now referred to as a psychosomatic disorder). Often patients would improve from taking the pills, even though they contained nothing but sugar.

However many studies have shown that psychotherapy (particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) can more effective than SSRI medications in combating anxiety and panic disorder.

In closing, I'm not telling you to stop taking medication, but if you have any doubts or concerns about medications or the chemical imbalance theory you should discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Sincerely,

Matthew Wagner
Panic Attack Recovery Newsletter

*http://naturalmedicine.suite101.com/article.cfm/green_tea_and_ltheanine_natural_anxiety_relief

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