

Nerve Tonic™

For Natural Stress Relief

THE NUMBERS

- ❑ Estimates indicate about 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects due to stress
- ❑ Some 40% of job turnover is due to job-related stress
- ❑ Close to 80% of primary care physician visits are due to stress-related issues
- ❑ Some 17 million Americans annually suffer from depression
- ❑ About 1 in 5 Americans will experience depression during their lifetimes

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

It is one of our most primal reactions. When confronted by a situation we believe to be threatening, our bodies react automatically without us ever making a conscious decision. We either beat a hasty retreat or brace ourselves to stand and fight. Either way, the body naturally knows it is going to need a greater supply of ready energy. The "fight or flight" response sets a complicated chain reaction in motion.

In a nutshell, the hypothalamus in the brain tells the adrenal glands to release corticosteroids which, in turn, quickly boost metabolism and make "fuel" available for immediate use by our muscles and other body systems. At the same time this is happening, the pituitary gland releases a hormone that signals the adrenal glands to release epinephrine and norepinephrine, both of which increase staying power for our fight or flight.

The fight or flight response is a natural way for the body to protect itself, and it is something that has helped the human race survive -- and thrive -- in a hostile world for thousands of years. It is a quick, automatic solution to a whole variety of potential threats, from predators to natural disasters. We see the threat, and we react in a way to reduce the threat as quickly as possible. In the wild, a threatening animal is either killed or evaded. A river threatens to flood, and we either sandbag the banks or move to higher ground.

MODERN LIFE COMPLICATES THINGS

The fight or flight response is designed to give us an immediate solution to a perceived threat from our environment, and when we are in a more "natural" state, that solution typically works well. If an aggressive, predatory animal is larger than us, we tend to run. If it's smaller, we try to kill it or at least run it off. Either way, the threat is quickly eliminated.

But what happens when we are confronted by a less natural threat? Say, for instance, the threat is not a menacing tiger but an angry boss or client at work? What if it is not an approaching hurricane but rush-hour traffic? Our bodies still naturally respond to what we perceive to be a threat, but the threat doesn't go away. No matter how frustrated we are with rush-hour traffic, we can't get away from it -- no flight -- and we can't just start ramming the cars in front of

us to clear the way -- no fight. So we sit, trapped with the threat, adrenal glands pumping, all body systems on alert, often for hours at a time.

The very natural responses designed to protect us -- increased respiration and heart rate, hormone release, increased metabolism, etc. -- can, in fact, begin to harm us when we experience them for prolonged periods.

Such is often the case in today's stressful world. The threats we are exposed to all around us every day never go away. Make no mistake -- by today's standards, constant calls from bill collectors when we don't have enough money to pay the bills, co-workers who frequently undermine our work and threaten our job security, and now the fear of international terrorism, are all still very real threats to our physical and emotional well-being. It's just that the old stand-by fight or flight response doesn't remove them.

The only way for us to escape the pressures of our crazy modern lives is to try to "get away from it all." We can take up a soothing hobby like yoga or painting, take a vacation, or resort to prescription drugs for reduction of anxiety, depression or anger. Many people also turn to alcohol and illegal drugs to give them a few moments of respite. Yet the threat most often remains, and the negative effects of prolonged stress continue to accumulate.

A NATURAL CYCLE TURNS VICIOUS

Common sense tells us that our bodies cannot maintain a heightened response stance for prolonged periods of time. Our hearts can't keep pumping faster than normal without eventually starting to wear down. Blood pumping harder and faster to increase our chances of escape from a predator eventually will begin to break down our blood vessels when the predator threatens for years at a time. The fight or flight impulse causes our digestion to slow down in order to direct energy to muscles in preparation for self-defense. Over a prolonged period, this slow-down throws off our normal digestive rhythms, leading to all kinds of problems, from indigestion to colitis.

When a stressful situation continues unabated for too long, we start feeling irritable, tired and physically unwell. We may have difficulty sleeping. Headaches, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, ulcers, and even cancer can result from this unnaturally prolonged and unabated exposure to stress. At the very least, stress lowers our immune function, making us more susceptible to colds, flu and other contagious illnesses and diseases. At the worst, it starts actually breaking down the body. Left unchecked, the cumulative effects of long-term stress will inevitably disrupt our health and well-being.

DEPRESSION ADDS A DANGEROUS TWIST

Closely related to stress in terms of its impact on the body is something a large number of us will have to deal with at least once in our lifetimes - depression. As the most commonly diagnosed psychiatric illness, depression literally wreaks havoc on our personal and professional lives. Its

impact can even be felt in the economy, as it results in about 10% of total loss of work productivity worldwide each year.

As its very name implies, depression literally impedes all our body systems. For instance, depression signals the immune system to cycle down, making us more susceptible to all kinds of illnesses. It is closely related to stress in that stress frequently leads to depression, which, in turn, can lead to greater stress, creating a vicious cycle.

TAKING THE NATURAL SOLUTION

While the problems of stress and depression are not going to magically disappear from modern life, when confronting these issues in our own lives, it is important to understand that these are based on a natural human response - fight or flight - and consider natural solutions. Prescription drugs to combat stress, anxiety and depression are among the most widely prescribed medications and can certainly be very helpful. However, many of these drugs have powerful effects on the chemical environment in the human brain, and, in some cases, they have been linked to the onset of other serious behavioral problems.

Nerve Tonic from Healing America is an all-natural dietary supplement carefully crafted to help alleviate the problems related to living in a stressful modern world. The herbs contained in Nerve Tonic have been used to advantage for generations in various cultures around the world. Let's take a look at them in more detail:

Valerian Root

An excellent herb for promoting relaxation and helping to improve sleep patterns, valerian has been used worldwide for centuries for problems

ranging from digestive disorders and liver dysfunction to nervousness, insomnia and even epilepsy. The essential oils in valerian are primarily responsible for its sedating effect on the body. Together with other active compounds in the herb, these oils have an effect on the body similar to that of some prescription tranquilizers. One of valerian's best attributes is that, following its sedative effect, people are left feeling refreshed rather than sluggish.

Kava Kava

It's non-addictive and mild, yet this tropical herb from the pepper family is quite effective in relieving anxiety and insomnia. It has been used for centuries by the Polynesians as a ceremonial intoxicant to help ease social anxiety and facilitate relaxation. It has sedative effects similar to prescription drugs containing benzodiazepines (Valium and its relatives), but, unlike those drugs, kava kava tends to improve concentration and memory while reducing anxiety. Kava kava also has some pain-relieving properties.

Lobelia

Best known as a blood cleanser, muscle relaxant, and a treatment for respiratory problems, lobelia has seeds that are rich in vitamins A and C, as well as manganese. It is one of the most powerful herbs available to help calm the mind and body - in fact, it is considered a systemic relaxant due to its general calming influences. One of lobelia's primary active compounds is the alkaloid lobeline, which mimics the effects of nicotine. It is often used as an herbal supplement to help people stop smoking.

Passionflower

Used extensively as a folk remedy for anxiety and sleeplessness, pas-

sionflower is native to the Americas. Its main chemical constituents include alkaloids and flavonoids, and it is the flavonoids that provide its relaxing and anti-anxiety effects. It has sedative, antispasmodic and analgesic effects that have been studied worldwide for close to a century.

St. John's Wort

Its scientific name is *Hypericum perforatum*, and this strong-smelling plant has been used for centuries for various health benefits, from helping to heal wounds on the battlefield in days of yore, to the more commonly known modern use in promoting psychological health and emotional balance. St. John's wort is the most widely used antidepressant in Germany, outselling Prozac by a 3 to 1 margin. Additionally, it contains chemicals called flavanols and flavonoids that have anti-inflammatory effects and help reduce pain.

Black Cohosh

Many women will recognize black cohosh for its most common use - easing the muscle soreness and general aches and pains that often accompany their menstrual periods. But that same relaxing effect makes this herb ideal for use as a relaxant, sedative and antispasmodic. It combines particularly well with skullcap, passionflower, and valerian as a mild tranquilizer.

Skullcap, hops, and catnip

These herbs have soothing and calming effects on the body. Skullcap is a general nerve tonic. Catnip is good for digestion, and it soothes the stomach and intestinal muscles. All 3 work well together as general herbal sedatives and sleep aids.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Let's face it. The stress we all face is not going to suddenly disappear. Our modern world is full of pitfalls and dangers our ancestors could never have even imagined. And new ones are cropping up each day. The good news is, we don't have to be victimized by the stress of our times. There are steps we can take immediately and easily to lessen the impact of stress and depression on our health and well-being.

Improving the diet - avoiding caffeine, processed sugar and flour, and other highly altered foods - is a great start. Regular moderate exercise is another great habit to develop. And finally, a high-quality, all-natural dietary supplement like Healing America's Nerve Tonic can complete the equation to help reduce the damaging effects of stress on all the systems of our bodies.

CAUTIONS

St. John's Wort can have potentially dangerous interactions with some prescription drugs, notably anticoagulants, oral contraceptives and antidepressants. If you are taking such medications, consult with your health provider before taking Nerve Tonic.

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease, but rather is a dietary supplement intended solely for nutritional support.

SOURCES

Cauffield JS, Forbes HJ. Dietary supplements used in the treatment of depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders. *Lippincotts Prim Care Pract.* 1999 May-Jun;3(3):290-304.

Donath F, Quispe S, Diefenbach K, Maurer A, Fietze I, Roots I. Critical evaluation of the effect of valerian root extract on sleep structure and sleep quality. *Pharmacopsychiatry.* 200 Mar;33(2):47-53.

Lehrl S. Clinical efficacy of kava extract WS 1490 in sleep disturbances associated with anxiety disorders. Results of a multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind clinical trial. *J Affect Disord.* 2004 Feb;78(2):101-10.

Singh YN, Singh NN. Therapeutic potential of kava in the treatment of anxiety disorders. *CNS Drugs.* 2002;16(11):731-43.

Subarnas A, Oshima Y, Sidik, Ohizumi Y. An antidepressant principle of *Lobelia inflata* L. (*Campanulaceae*). *J Pharm Sci.* 1992 Jul;81(7):620-1.

Dhawan K, Kumar S, Sharma A. Anti-anxiety studies on extracts of *Passiflora incarnata* Linneaus. *J Ethnopharmacol.* 2001 Dec;78(2-3):165-70.

Kligler B. Black cohosh. *Am Fam Physician.* 2003 Jul 1;68(1):114-6.