

# Ask Leyla: Can nutrition influence generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)?

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | August 18, 2017



**Q:** My fiancé suffers from generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). His is on antidepressants for a long time but they don't seem to be of much help. Are there any nutritional recommendations to support him?

**A:** Barring any emotional/psychological issues, there is a physiological basis for anxiety that can be helped with changes in diet.

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can actually cause anxiety along with intense sweating, lightheadedness and even dizziness and palpitations. A thorough assessment of your fiancé's diet and symptoms would go a long way to reveal any unstable blood sugar issues.

While headache is a common complaint in those intolerant of monosodium glutamate, MSG can also cause palpitations and anxiety in susceptible individuals. Prepared bouillions, yeast extracts, caseinates and smoke flavorings among others, contain MSG—and should be avoided (stay tuned for more on MSG next week).

Intolerances to other additives, preservatives and artificial food colorings are known to cause reactions in many people.

Mitral valve prolapse can trigger feelings of anxiety. In a vicious cycle, MVP lowers magnesium levels and low magnesium can trigger symptoms of MVP like chest pain, tightness and palpitations—causing anxiety. It is especially important in those with MVP to ensure stable blood sugar throughout the day to help prevent symptoms.

Deficiencies of magnesium, B vitamins, zinc and healthy fats may contribute to anxiety and depression. A qualified nutritionist can help identify which micronutrients require repletion.

To your health!

As you may know, I've been doing a weekly "Q&A with Leyla" podcast feature with Dr. Hoffman. Now you can get my perspective and expertise every Friday on my own episode of the *Intelligent Medicine* Podcast. If you missed last week's, you can listen here. To be sure you don't miss out on any of my important insights and information, subscribe today!

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*Leyla Muedin has clients all over the country via telephone consultations. No need to travel to New York City for a nutrition consult. Should you require her services, please call our office to set up an appointment: (212) 779-1744.*