

EPISODE 89

“AS: *See a lot of my clients may not even have an official diagnosis, yet they have experiences of anxiety. And often times, they don’t realize at the time but what’s underneath their anxiety is the reason that they’re turning to food to numb out that feeling because it can be very paralyzing.”*

[INTRO]

[0:00:28.5] AS: You know battling food in your body doesn’t work. You want to love and accept yourself, and because you’re insatiable, you want results too. You bring the same intensity to your life, wanting to maximize your time, potential, and experiences you have here on our beautiful and wondrous planet Earth. Fair warning, it will be a rollercoaster. But for those insatiable, this is your primetime to thrive. Here is just saying yes to the hunger of wanting it all.

I’m your host, Ali Shapiro, who is dedicated to pioneering a saner and more empowering approach to health and weight loss.

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:01:09.5] AS: Welcome to episode 89 of the insatiable podcast: *Food Tips to Relieve Anxiety*. Anxiety isn’t an all or nothing diagnosis or all in your head. It’s like turning up a thermostat in your body. The hotter it gets, the more anxiety you feel. In this minisode, I’ll share why anxiety is more likely to affect women, three food tips you can implement to reduce your anxiety, and a common vitamin deficiency that might require a special kind of vitamin to relieve your anxiety.

While I don’t get into the emotional piece of anxiety, I will in my Fall program that’s coming up in September where we’ll discuss how to free yourself from emotional overeating. Often times anxiety drives us to overeat but then our overeating causes anxiety. We’ll help you transform that feeling in my Fall program. So sign up at Alishapiro.com to get on the list so that you can be the first to enroll when registration opens after Labor Day.

I would love to work with as many Insatiable listeners because we have such a rocking community. Enjoy this minisode.

[EPISODE]

[0:02:19.5] AS: Hey insatiable listeners. So, today I want to do little minisode on some food tips to relieve anxiety. I think it's been a while now but I feel like everyone's anxious. I often hear from my clients, "Oh, I have social anxiety, or I'm just always on edge or you know, I have healthy mounts of anxiety," which you can have.

But it's kind of alarming to me how we normalized anxiety and so what I want to do today is offer you some things you can do with your food to reduce your anxiety. It's important to realize that anxiety is not an all or nothing thing, like either you have it or you don't. It's often on a continuum so think of like a thermostat right? The more we turn up the heat, the more anxious you get.

Anxiety goes up as you heat yourself up and you can heat yourself up physically, emotionally, or spiritually if you're in the middle of, you know, there's many roots. Today we're just going to talk about the physical and food roots here, but it's really important, especially most of our insatiable listeners are women and a lifetime diagnosis of anxiety and disorders is higher in women. With the latest stats, 33% of women experiencing an anxiety disorder in their lifetime of women. Men, it's about 22%.

I think either way, it's too high for either of our genders, and I also see a lot of my clients may not even have an official diagnosis, yet they have experiences of anxiety and often times, they don't realize it at the time but what's underneath their anxiety is the reason that they're turning to food, to numb out that feeling because it can be very paralyzing. The experts tend to believe and again, "experts" are also us in our own bodies and what works for us tend to believe that it comes from a combination of hormonal fluctuations, brain chemistry and upbringing. Where women often feel more responsible for the happiness of others such as children and spouse.

Those are some of the root causes but let's get to the root causes of hormonal fluctuations and brain chemistry which all start with partly, in part, with what we eat. Some of the ways and what

I'm going to discuss today with your food are really instant ways that you can reduce your anxiety and notice it.

One of the best ways is to learn how to balance your blood sugar. I cannot tell you how many clients have reduced their anxiety dramatically by balancing their blood sugar. If you've listened to the Insatiable Podcast a lot, or even infrequently, you probably think I sound like a broken record but everything comes back to on a physical level, your gut health and blood sugar. If you have anxiety, that chances are, you're not eating right for your body and if I could take a generic guess, a general guess, you're probably not eating enough fat in particular.

We did an entire episode on healthy fats that you could check out and not remembering the episode number right now, which isn't very good for promoting the podcast but it's really important to figure out how to balance your blood sugar. You know, there isn't one diet that works for everyone and if you're trying to find a template and you're experiencing anxiety, that chances are that template isn't working. So, learn how to balance your blood sugar.

I have that as an option for one of my programs, that's an at-home self-study course, it's called Curb Your Afternoon Cravings because if you're having cravings in the afternoon, you also are not eating right for your body. But also, episode 46, *Instant Weight Loss Tips*, can give you some really actionable blood sugar tips to balance them. So, focus on balancing your blood sugar. You will be able to reduce that thermostat incredibly. In fact, I would say that's probably 50% of the physical equation when it comes to managing anxiety.

The second thing is reducing sugar. Sugar makes our blood sugar rise and also creates a rather anxious state inside of us. You can – I think when it comes to reducing sugar, we did an excellent episode on – or I did, it was when Juliet was still on the podcast about how to reduce sugar and it starts with becoming aware of how much sugar you're eating.

So many of my clients, they've read a lot about nutrition, they know a lot but they don't understand how often it's sneaking in things like sauces and dressings and even the other day, I was totally – it was like a hundred degrees here and I was craving a green juice, I don't normally eat them but I had some nuts with me – I always need some fat – and really wanted one and I was at Trader Joe's and they had this "green smoothie" but it was all fruit and then just some

like chlorella and I was like, “That’s not a green smoothie, that’s fruit with greens.” So that’s just an example of you know, even when you think you’re doing healthy things, lots of sugar.

Try to reduce your sugar, swap out more natural forms like maple syrup, honey, coconut sugar, even fruit and that was Episode 34, *Anatomy of a Sugar Craving*. Reducing sugar is a life-changer. Getting off of it to the point where it’s not regularly in your life is a game-changer. The challenge there is that often, sugar is the solution, not the problem. In other words, people turn to sugar when they aren’t feeling anxious to numb that out. Or when they’re tired, or when they’re upset, or for reasons that they just don’t know yet.

But, it’s something to really start working towards and connecting to the reduction in anxiety can make it a lot more compelling to reduce your sugar or get off of it rather than, “Oh I’m being good or bad, or is this going to help me lose weight?” You’ll get a much more immediate result if you focus on connecting that to less anxiety. If you struggle with anxiety, I would say, stick to the lower end of caffeine as part of this kind of stimulation tip. You know, less — white tea has some of the least caffeine, green tea the next, black tea and then coffee. If you are struggling with anxiety, you got to limit that caffeine. It’s just making it worse.

Then the third big thing related to food that causes food sensitivities, or fourth thing if you consider caffeine my tip as well, is food sensitivities. So many of my clients have gotten rid of their anxiety by cutting out dairy as a really big one, some people it’s gluten, some people it’s both. One client, she was one of my first clients, Joana. Her story is on my website in a YouTube video, so this is all public knowledge. She shared about how getting off dairy not only reduced her anxiety so much, but she was also able to be around her cats. Because anxiety is in part an inflammation load that is – has hit a critical tipping point that makes us anxious. She was able to be around her cats by getting off dairy.

Some people, it’s other foods. But consider food sensitivities. If you really want to tackle this and transform it so you’re not kind of just living with low grade anxiety but removing it all together, check out if you have food sensitivities and listen to Dr. Susan Blum. The episode we just – I just did with her on gut health. We’ll explain how to do an elimination diet really really well. The cliff notes version are you eliminate the food for three weeks and then you add it back in and for three days you notice any symptoms. And again, not just in your gut, which we often tend to

think about. But look at your energy, your mental fog and see if that anxiety is present and that's episode 83 with Dr. Susan Blum and that's been a huge hit in terms for our community.

Also, further symptoms complicating this is women; depression often shows up as anxiety. So if you are depressed and it's showing up as anxiety, it's going to be blood sugar but it's also going to be gut health as well. So check out episodes 10 and 11 where we get more into those root causes of depression on the gut biome and our episode with podcast friend, my friend and who I deeply admire, Dr. Kelly Brogan, a natural relief for depression.

And then just one note that I want to make about something specific that is important to realize related to anxiety is sometimes anxiety is caused by a B12 deficiency. Now there can be many different root causes for B12 deficiency. Sometimes it's people who are vegetarian who needs to be eating meat. Not everyone can thrive on a vegetarian diet. Some people do and great for them. I have some clients who when they do the food experiments that I give them, they get hungrier when they eat meat and other people are hungrier without it. So it's really fascinating how we're all different. But sometimes you are B12 deficient because you're not eating meat.

Sometimes there's other issues there. One of them is if you have a couple snips on what's called the MTHFR gene, so that's MTHFR and it abbreviates this long scientific sounding word. But if you have one of the snips of the MTHFR gene, that often limits your body's ability to absorb B12. So one of the ways, if you are someone out there whose done 23andMe, I did it for Christmas because I was just curious and my sister had done it several years ago when it gave you this like scary data on diseases and I just wasn't ready to get that because I'm still slightly a hypochondriac.

But if you have 23andMe and you've done that, they won't directly tell you if you have the snips for the MTHFR gene but if you can link to – if you go to geneticgenie.com, you can link your 23andMe results for free. They do recommend a donation. I donated \$10 bucks because it was really helpful. I thought the value for me to know that I have one of the snips of the MTHFR genes. So if you have some of this snips often it means your body has trouble absorbing vitamin B12 and so all you needed to do is get a mentholated version of vitamin B12.

So I have a mentholated version of B12 that I take to correct — I only have one snip. There's, I think, up to four snips. So it's more likely that I'd have trouble but it's not absolutely trouble. Some people, it's rare that you'll find one thing to be the silver bullet but some people who have OCD, anxiety when they start taking mentholated B12 it changes everything.

But for most of us, it's going to be a combination of things and if you are interested in the B12 deficiency and root causes of that, in the show notes, which you can always find at alishapiro.com/podcast, I'm going to do a tremendous article that Dr. Kelly Brogan wrote on B12 deficiency and its effect on brain health because there's a lot of root causes for it.

But some of the easier to discern are if you have the B12 – the MTHFR gene that makes absorbing B12 difficult or if you aren't eating enough meat and you need it, are kind of the easy, low hanging fruit. But again, if usually when it comes to anxiety this is a thermostat. So if you can start absorbing B12 that turns that thermostat down. If you balance your blood sugar it turns it down even more.

Another thing that you can do when you go to your doctor and it's usually a test covered by insurance to see how high that thermostat is, is get a CRP test. It's a C reactive protein test and that will show you how much inflammation you have. So if your numbers are really high and you're anxious, it's a pretty good sign that there's some relief that you could get through changing your diet.

So those are some tips that you can start to use to relieve anxiety. Now I do want to say, which this is a mini-episode so we are not going to get into the emotional spiritual side of things. But I am doing a program in the Fall, which if you've been listening to *Insatiable* the past couple of episodes, I've been promoting where we're going to get to the emotional reasons that people overeat.

And one of the issues, one of the main feelings that triggers this that we then turn to sugar or eat the foods we are sensitive to is anxiety. At least that's what clients are able to identify it as on the surface. But if you really have the right tools, which I am going to teach in the program, if you go a little bit deeper, there's always something a little bit deeper with anxiety. It can be feelings of uncertainty and what to do with that.

Sometimes it's feeling of self-doubt but it's a much deeper emotional piece to anxiety and I really think if you are trying to do things the natural way or to do them as natural as possible, you have to address the emotional side of anxiety. We'll also be addressing this cultural conditioning of why women feel more responsible for other people's happiness, and how to create a win-win by not doing the emotional labor for other people.

So I'm really excited for the fall program. It's an entree or an appetizer with Truce with Food. So if you've been curious about Truce with Food and it feels like so much of a commitment because it is a longer program and it's definitely a bigger financial investment, this Fall program that's going to be freedom from overeating around that will be six weeks, \$497.00, much more digestible and this is the fun part of the emotional stuff. It's the real liberating stuff where you can really get to a much better place with your emotions.

So I am really excited for it. It will be life changing and I don't say that lightly. But when you can finally see what's underneath your anxiety, which often causes the bad eating, you realize it's not this monster under your bed or something that you have to live with for the rest of your life and that you'll start to also, in the program learn, if you've been told you have social anxiety, what's underneath that and how can you transform that?

Rather than really just try to get to zero and kind of grin and bear it and again, as someone who, I don't know if I ever had anxiety but I definitely struggle with depression. It is so much more sustainable and full of freedom to have these emotional skills that give you choices around what you want to do and again, these tools I have been fine-tuning and really getting sharp for 10 years.

So this is very different than other emotional eating approaches that just want you to wade through them. You definitely, we're going to work on shrinking them so you don't feel as anxious but there's also some really sharp tools to shrink them faster. All right, so I hope you liked this mini-sode on how to use food to relieve anxiety and check out those other episodes because there's a lot more freedom from anxiety than you might know is possible right now.

[END OF DISCUSSION]

[0:17:44.0] AS: Have questions or reactions about the episode? Reach out to me on Instagram and Twitter @alimshapiro, or Facebook at facebook.com/alimarieshapiro. If you love this show, please leave an iTunes review and tell one friend this week about how to get the Insatiable Podcast on their phone.

See you on social media.

[END]