

SCRIPT: Chew your way to a stress free life  
Nada Damaty  
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This audio documentary is about the effect of food on anxiety. Producer and reporter Nada El Damaty will address how an individual's eating habits can affect their anxiety levels, as well as how different foods can cause fluctuations in anxiety levels.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Slow motion*

*SFX: Heartbeats- fade in the next SB at " the way"*

*SFX: Bell- fade in the next SB at " when you're"*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade out in next SB at " I would never"*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade in in next SB at "I would never"*

Everybody knows what it feels like to be anxious, the feeling you get before an important meeting, the way your heart beats when you're in danger, or the stress you feel when you're late to class.

*NAT SOUND: Classroom- FADE IN*

*MENNA EID (ME): "Oh my God if I was late to class and having to walk in class late and have everyone look at me I would never I wouldn't if I was five minutes late I would never enter that class again." (: 11)*

*NAT SOUND: Classroom- FADE OUT*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade out in next SB at "Know the feeling"*

*MUSIC: Slow Motion fade in in next SB at "Know the feeling"*

That was Menna Eid a confident, energetic, student at the American University in Cairo, who is diagnosed with anxiety, telling us how anxiety makes her feel. If you have anxiety disorder, or

face any mental health problems then you know the feeling, the feeling you get before any important event, becomes part of your daily routine, and over time starts to disrupt your life.

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade out in next SB at “ Many hangouts”*

*MUSIC: Bittersweet fade in next SB at “ Many hangouts”*

*NAT SOUND: Door closing- fade in in next SB at “ I did go out”*

*ME: “I wouldn’t go out sometimes. Most of the times I wouldn't like for the longest time I would avoid many hang outs. I would make friends I would it would make me feel like no one likes me if I didn't meet someone new. So many things so many things I wouldn't do if I did go out. I would be so uncomfortable I would be like the party pooper because I'm the only person who's not talking who's not having fun because I'm so anxious when I'm around people.” (: 27)*

*NAT SOUND: Heavy breathing- fade in in next SB at “ such as stress”*

Anxiety disorder is the most prevalent mental health disorder, according to a journal called “Current Diagnosis and Treatment of Anxiety Disorders,” published in 2013. Usually it’s triggered by something specific such as, stress at work or school, or overthinking, and one important factor that may trigger anxiety is one’s eating habits. From here, begins the intense fluctuations a person facing anxiety disorder experiences. Aya Galal, an independent Graduate who lives alone in Dubai, and is self diagnosed with anxiety disorder, explains how her anxiety was provoked.

*AYA GALAL (AG): “I think it was during my second year at uni when I started experiencing high levels of anxiety it was towards the end of the year when the workload started piling up and because I studied abroad I was very very very homesick at that*

*point. So I think that just added to my stress levels and surfaced through anxiety attacks.” (: 18)*

*NAT SOUND: Door knocking- fade in in next SB at “On a visit”*

On a visit to Dr. Marwa Hussein, a psychiatrist at the American University in Cairo, she addressed how excessive worrying can cause anxiety.

*MUSIC: Bittersweet fade out in next SB at “By nature”*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade in in next SB at “By nature”*

*MARWA HUSSEIN (MH): “Anxiety experienced by people who worry excessively, and usually people who worry excessively are those who they feel usually and secure they want everything to be perfect. They want to feel in control of everything. Otherwise things will be out of their control and they are negative thinkers by nature.” (: 20)*

*SFX: Movie intro- fade in in next SB at “Many movies”*

Throughout time, and in the past many movies (NAT sound of movie opening) and documentaries have portrayed anxiety, its causes and its effects. “Captain Neumann,” released in 1963, portrays an interesting case of post traumatic stress after WWII, and its treatment. Also a documentary called “food matters,” Made in 2008 by James Colquhoun, after his father was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, explains that certain nutrients can cause fluctuations in a person’s stress and anxiety levels.

*MOVIE CLIP: Food Matters- “ You are what you eat, food does matter.”*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade out in next SB at “Doing so”*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade in in next SB at “Doing so”*

*AG: “I’ve seen a few movies with characters who play the role of going through anxiety and I think one or two were actually close to a very accurate representation of how much it can actually take a toll on someone’s life. But there were some other movies that I saw that weren’t very successful in doing so.” (: 17)*

Different eating habits don't only affect your physical well-being but they can have an evident impact on one's anxiety levels.

*NAT SOUND: Treadmill- fade in in next SB at “ I would workout”*

*NAT SOUND: Chewing- fade in in next SB at “ All I eat”*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade out in next SB at “ I just switched”*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade in in next SB at “I just switched”*

*ME: “At some point in my life I was healthier I would work out I would eat healthy I wouldn't eat any kind of junk food. And I think I was less anxious during that period of my life. But then anxiety disorders, so I just switched to all that it is junk food. So maybe that's why I still struggle with anxiety.” (: 19)*

Noorhan Abdel Shafy a nutritionist also explains the effect of food on anxiety.

*NAT SOUND- ordering food- fade in in next SB at “ Order something”*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade out in next SB at “Guilty mode”*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade in in next SB at “Guilty mode”*

*NOORHAN ABDEL SHAFY (NAS): "If you're very hungry and you're in a state of where I'll just eat anything whatever is in front of me. So you probably or something junk and then so it affects your mood when it fills you up and it satisfies your needs for food and then afterwards you tend to get into that guilty feeling guilty mode which adds to your anxiety." (: 25)*

But do those who suffer anxiety believe in the correlation between anxiety and food?

*ME: "Yeah definitely that makes sense. You are what you eat like that saying if you eat unhealthy it's going to come out some kind of way in your skin and how you feel and everything your lifestyle what you eat is everything. So definitely it would definitely have a very strong correlation." (: 12)*

*MUSIC: Emotional Cinematic Background fade out in next SB at "From that list"*

*MUSIC: Slow Motion fade in in next SB at "From that list"*

*AG: "During the peak of my anxiety, I would say my eating habits were very very unhealthy. I think the excessive levels of stress that I was going through just constantly made me crave junk food chocolate crisps basically comfort food thinking that it would make me feel better when that actually wasn't the case. And when I started doing more research about anxiety I found that there are actually foods that reduce stress and provide calmer and more stable energy. And they were more nutritious and healthier options and junk with almonds and avocados were the two that I ate the most from that list. And I actually noticed a difference in my mood and just my overall stress and anxiety levels when I actually started regularly including them and my diet." (: 45)*

According to a book called "the anti anxiety food solution," by Trudy Scott, proteins along with elements such as Zinc, Vitamin B6 and Magnesium, which can be found in fruits vegetables and nuts, can aid in boosting one's serotonin, and causes them to be more calm and relaxed.

Therefore its critical to have a balanced healthy diet.

*NAS: "An imbalance in the nutrients consumed, will cause an increase in anxiety levels. Generally speaking like too much caffeine. Or like when you're taking medications that contain caffeine these can spike or increase the feelings of anxiety." (: 20)*

*MUSIC: Slow motion fade out in next SB at “However”*

*MUSIC: Bittersweet fade in in next SB at “However”*

Doctors say, eating healthy, meditating or exercising, are all ways to improve one’s anxiety levels. However, the first step of dealing with anxiety whether experienced by you or a loved one is being more aware.

*MH: “People need to understand that there are things they can control and there are things beyond their control so the best thing is to stop thinking about them try to divert their thoughts or think about things that are more positive and things that they can do sitting and worrying about things that might go wrong or that might not happen or happen in the future is not going to make any difference.” (: 21)*

*AG: “I think the one thing that I'd want is for people to acknowledge mental health as a more legitimate issue and take the initiative to educate themselves about it even if they're not going through it themselves. Personally I was very lucky because I had family and friends who understood that and helped me get through it and I think that was one of the main reasons I was able to not let anxiety defeat me for too long. But unfortunately in our society there is a very strong stigma attached to mental health and not everyone is lucky to. Have people who actually understand it and are willingly. Going to help them get through it.” (: 33)*

This audio documentary was produced by Nada El Damaty as part of the audio production course at the American University in Cairo, taught by professor Kim Fox, in the fall 2017 semester. Special thanks to my interviewees: Menna Eid, Dr. Marwa Hussein, Aya Galal and Noorhan Abdel Shafy. Royalty free Music used are Slow motion, Emotional cinematic background and Bittersweet. Nat sounds were all recorded by Nada El Damaty.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT: Bittersweet*

