

Understanding some basics about GABA will help you choose foods and supplements that will help optimize this essential neurotransmitter so you can have more energy during the day and sleep better at night.

You remember that neurons talk to each other through chemical note-passing called neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters can be excitatory or inhibitory. Most are excitatory and stimulate activity in the target neuron. A few are inhibitory decreasing activity in the target neurons.

GABA is the principle inhibitory neuron in mammals. Many neurotransmitters are amino acid based and so is GABA.

Because GABA is the principle inhibitory neurotransmitter, the brain relies on it to modulate many pathways. Lack of GABA or inefficient GABA management can lead to some pathways running somewhat out of control leading to symptoms such as anxiety or panic attacks or a racing brain when you are trying to sleep.

One interesting side note is that GABA is instrumental in the growth and development of the embryonic brain.

Why might a person have GABA issues? Inflammation of the brain can lead to a decrease in GABA production or problems with GABA management including GABA receptor issues. Brain inflammation is a large topic and the specific reasons may be widely varied from person to person. Please see other videos where I discuss general detox. That being said, most people will do better taking some basic steps such as supplementing with omega-3 fatty acids and Vitamin D unless proven otherwise. According to many researchers EVERYONE with any kind of brain problem should be evaluated for gluten sensitivity. I concur. Gluten can alter brain blood flow, alter some enzyme function among other things. In cases of gluten sensitivity, the brain can often heal on a gluten-free diet. Of course gluten is not the only offender.

As far as treatment goes, the natural world of nutritional supplements has some excellent options. For many years we have worked with NeuroScience to help us diagnose and improve neurotransmitter balance issues. One of our favorite products related to GABA management is Kavinace (rhymes with brace). Research has shown that certain compounds can help normalize GABA function. These include 4-amino-3-phenylbutyric acid and taurine.

Taurine is key to the normalizing of GABA for several reasons. Besides being an inhibitory amino acid in its own right, it also:

- acts as a GABA activity enhancer
- aids in GABA synthesis
- prevents GABA breakdown
- blocks GABA reuptake

4-amino-3-phenylbutyric acid is a GABA derivative that supports GABA receptors and like taurine, easily crosses the blood-brain barrier.

On a side note, many companies sell GABA in capsules. If you find that this helps calm you down, you most likely have two problems. One is some sort of GABA deficiency or GABA receptor problem and the other is a leaky blood-brain barrier (BBB) as GABA is a large molecule and shouldn't get in the brain from the blood. We use GABA supplementation as a basic test of the BBB then. Take 1000 mg of GABA and if you notice a calming effect in the next hour or so, you are a candidate for some BBB repair. Some people will get a paradoxical reaction and feel agitated instead of calm. The conclusion is the same, time for some BBB repair. GABA should not be crossing the BBB to produce any type of noticeable reaction.

Kavinace is our best seller for helping with natural sleep. Many people have found that taking 2-4 Kavinace capsules 1-4 hours before bedtime can have a marked impact on the quality and duration of sleep. Many people need some GABA support during the day and find that a little Kavinace throughout the day can make a big difference.

Some people prefer a product called Gabatone from Apex Energetics. Apex products have been excellent so we won't argue with that preference.

Another side note that can't be over emphasized, if you are having sleep issues, nothing from the pharmaceutical world will produce sleep. Sleep is a natural state that requires normal brain communication. Pharmaceuticals induce an altered state of consciousness so you don't know you aren't sleeping. Supplements can support natural sleep inducing pathways.

One more side note: many people who have problems with maintaining healthy levels of serotonin. Often you will want to take some Neuroscience Serene or Travacor with Kavinace to get the most benefit.