



# **Amino Acids 101**

## **for Anxiety & Gut Health**

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## Introduction

Targeted individual amino acid supplements can be used for balancing brain chemistry in order to alleviate anxiety, fear, worry, panic attacks, and feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Supplementing with specific amino acids can also be helpful in addressing other problems that contribute to or exacerbate anxiety, such as sugar cravings and addictions. In addition, supplemental amino acids can help with depression and insomnia, which often co-occur with anxiety. When you balance your brain chemistry, not only will you alleviate symptoms of anxiety, but you'll also have a great mood, eliminate cravings, sleep well, and have good energy and mental focus.

What I mean when I say that “brain chemistry” affects our mood has to do with very specific brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters transmit impulses throughout the central nervous system and have a huge impact on mental health and functioning, as well as a wide array of physiological functions. You can balance your brain chemistry by identifying neurotransmitter deficiencies and then raising their levels with amino acid supplements. Amino acids are needed for making neurotransmitters.

The targeted individual amino acid supplements that I use with my anxious clients are GABA and theanine (for low GABA), tryptophan and 5-HTP (for low serotonin), DPA (for low endorphins), tyrosine (for low catecholamines), and glutamine (for low blood sugar). I love that they offer quick relief from anxiety and hope! I call them the amazing amino acids for this reason!

No matter what their diagnosis, if a client has anxiety we always start with looking at anxiety (and the related low brain chemical symptoms using a questionnaire - see below) and do trials of the respective amino acids to help them quickly ease their anxiety, worry, fears and overwhelm and eliminate panic attacks, phobias, OCD and social anxiety. We do this because they are looking for immediate relief and because the individual amino acids deliver those results quickly and effectively while all their other underlying issues are being addressed.

Many of those underlying root causes are gut related which is why I have curated this fabulous line up of experts to share their expertise on gut-health on **The Anxiety Summit 5: Gut-Brain Axis**. They share their gut health expertise and I help connect the dots back to anxiety, with neurotransmitter imbalances and amino acids. One example is how GABA helps the low GABA kind of physical anxiety in IBS/SIBO and also helps ease the visceral pain/tummy pain when you are bloated.

If you have anxiety, we clearly have to address the gut issues: dysbiosis, parasites, food sensitivities, low stomach acid, leaky gut, low pancreatic enzymes, SIBO (small intestinal bacterial infection), IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), problems with the vagus nerve, low B12, poor bile quality, liver toxicity, constipation. We also have to address a compromised endocannabinoid system, mitochondrial dysfunction, environmental toxins, life stresses and many other factors.

Any of the above gut issues (often more than one) can contribute to anxiety and you'll learn the many mechanisms and solutions from the expert interviews. Always keep in mind the role the amino acids play in your healing journey. In each of the interviews, as I mentioned above, you'll hear me add my contributions based on how I see GABA or tryptophan or one of the other amino acids fit into the topic at hand.

Figuring out and addressing the above root causes (all covered in the summit) can take time and while all the above is being investigated and addressed, the amino acids offer quick relief and you feel hope from day one!

The amino acids also make everything so much easier to handle and much less overwhelming. In some cases where fear is a factor, this goes away and you can more easily handle whatever comes your way. Labs tests and protocols feel less challenging. I talk more about this in one of my interviews: **Tryptophan & GABA and gut-brain connections** (I write more about this in the conclusion below).

Of course, diet, sleep, nature, and exercise are foundational when you have anxiety, and the amino acids play a role here too:

- Dietary changes – like quitting gluten (and sometimes all grains), sugar, caffeine, alcohol - are a breeze because the amino acids help break the addictions, so no willpower is required and you don't feel deprived.
- The amino acids GABA, tryptophan and glutamine may help with sleep when low GABA, low serotonin and low blood sugar are factors. DPA can help sleep when pain is an issue, as can GABA and tryptophan.
- And tyrosine improves motivation and energy, so you want to get outside and you look forward to exercise. It can also help create calm energy.

To complement my interviews and to give you context as you hear my amino acid and neurotransmitter/brain chemical comments in the other interviews, I've compiled this ebook, **Amino Acids 101 for Anxiety & Gut Health**. It includes the questionnaire/symptoms and a summary of the products I use with my clients. I also share case studies/success stories to illustrate just how effective they are, and I make the gut-brain and digestion-anxiety connections in each case. I also share a short summary of amino acids with a direct impact on gut health.



## The Questionnaire/Low Brain Chemistry Symptoms

The targeted use of individual amino acid supplements will balance brain chemistry (neurotransmitters) to alleviate anxiety, fear, worry, panic attacks, and feeling stressed or overwhelmed. They can also be helpful in addressing other problems that contribute to or exacerbate anxiety, such as sugar cravings and addictions. In addition, they can help with depression and insomnia, which often co-occur with anxiety. When you balance your brain chemistry, not only will you alleviate symptoms of anxiety, you'll also have a great mood, eliminate cravings, sleep well, and have good energy and mental focus.

In many of the interviews you'll hear me mention the amino acid questionnaire and how we do a trial of an amino acid based on symptoms. These are the symptoms I assess with my clients.

### Low GABA symptoms

- Anxiety and feeling overwhelmed or stressed
- Feeling worried or fearful
- Panic attacks
- Unable to relax or loosen up
- Stiff or tense muscles
- Feeling stressed and burned-out
- Craving carbs, alcohol, or drugs for relaxation and calming
- Insomnia \*
- Have intrusive thoughts, perseverate or have an overactive brain \*
- Inability to prioritize planned actions \*
- Acrophobia (fear of heights) \*
- Poor focus \*
- Rectal spasms \*
- Burning mouth \*
- Visceral pain (belly pain with IBS) \*

(\* New additions that are not in my book)

### Low Serotonin Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Panic attacks or phobias
- Feeling worried or fearful

- Obsessive thoughts or behaviors
- Perfectionism or being overly controlling
- Irritability
- Anxiety that's worse in winter
- Winter blues or seasonal affective disorder
- Negativity or depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Excessive self-criticism
- Low self-esteem and poor self-confidence
- PMS or menopausal mood swings
- Sensitivity to hot weather
- Hyperactivity
- Anger or rage
- Digestive issues
- Fibromyalgia, temporomandibular joint syndrome, or other pain syndromes
- Difficulty getting to sleep
- Insomnia or disturbed sleep
- Afternoon or evening cravings for carbs, alcohol or drugs

Keep in mind that worry and anxiety can be a result of low GABA and also low serotonin, so you may check off anxiety in both sections. Low GABA tends to result in more physical anxiety, while low serotonin tends to result in more anxiety in the head, ruminating thoughts etc.

### Low Catecholamine Symptoms

- Depression and apathy
- Easily bored
- Lack of energy
- Lack of focus
- Lack of drive and low motivation
- Attention deficit disorder
- Procrastination and indecisiveness
- Craving carbs, alcohol, caffeine, or drugs for energy

### Low Endorphin Symptoms

- Heightened sensitivity to emotional pain
- Heightened sensitivity to physical pain

- Crying or tearing up easily
- Eating to soothe your mood, or comfort eating
- Really, really loving certain foods, behaviors, drugs, or alcohol
- Craving a reward or numbing treat

### Low Blood Sugar Symptoms

- Crave sugar, starch or alcohol any time during the day
- Irritable, shaky, headachey – especially if too long between meals
- Intense cravings for sweets
- Lightheaded if meals are missed
- Eating relieves fatigue
- Agitated, easily upset, nervous

Each of the above sections on specific neurotransmitter or brain chemical imbalances are found in Chapter 6 of my book *The Antianxiety Food Solution: How the Foods You Eat Can Help You Calm Your Anxious Mind, Improve Your Mood and End Cravings* (New Harbinger 2011).

They can also be found on my blog here: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/amino-acids-mood-questionnaire-from-the-antianxiety-food-solution/>

They were reprinted from *The Mood Cure* (2004) with permission from Julia Ross. They do contain some of my own modifications based on my experience with working with many clients.

Doing trials of the respective amino acids are based on the above symptoms and the results are profound and often felt within a few minutes, as you'll read in the stories I share below.

The new additions to the low GABA section (marked with \* above) are based on new research and my clinical observations since my book was published, so are not in my book.



## Case studies and success stories

In order to illustrate the power of the amino acids, I've gathered a few select case studies/success stories, making the gut-brain-anxiety connections in each case.

If you're new to my work and using targeted individual amino acids in this way, these case studies/success stories will give you a taste of their effectiveness, an indication of how quickly they can work and why use an individualized approach.

If you're already part of my community, you'll recognize some of these from my blog posts. I hope they serve as a good recap for you and help you make the connections back to gut health and the topics covered in this **Anxiety Summit 5: Gut-Brain Axis**.

I share case studies to illustrate the following:

- GABA eases overwhelm and anxiety and stops sugar cravings (to her surprise) in a young woman
- Tryptophan helps a woman sleep through the night for the first time in many years (a trial and error approach to find the ideal tryptophan product)
- GABA helps an 11-year old with irritability, focus issues, ADHD, anxiety and meltdowns
- Tyrosine helps to alleviate anxiety and panic attacks and create a feeling of calm focus
- GABA helps a young boy with dental anxiety
- GABA helps a young boy child with ASD sleep for the first time in years and end his carb cravings
- 5-HTP helps a young adopted boy with ADHD symptoms
- Tryptophan helps a woman with TMJ pain, headaches and worry, and improves her mood mood and sleep
- Tryptophan, tyrosine and GABA helped a newly qualified nutritionist eliminate her imposter syndrome and social awkwardness in 2 weeks
- GABA, DPA and glutamine help a woman with eczema and anxiety/depression to quit gluten and sugar

### Melissa uses GABA for the calming benefits and is shocked that her sugar cravings are gone too



Taken orally, GABA works to relax, calm, ease anxiety and social anxiety, quiet the mind, help with insomnia and sleeping better, reduces neck tension, removes uneasiness and worry, and gives hope AND also reduces and often eliminates cravings totally.

Melissa discovered this was a wonderful side-benefit (we like side-benefits vs side-effects!) when she recently added Source Naturals GABA Calm in anticipation of holiday travel and holiday gatherings and shared this:

*I'm glad I saw the post about GABA on your FB page a couple weeks ago, which led me to this article. I bought Source Naturals GABA Calm and have been taking 1-3 per day for two weeks. I'm glad I bought it before travelling home for Christmas – I was cool as a cucumber at the airport and was much calmer when visiting family and friends compared to last year! The true test of its efficacy will be in two weeks when the semester starts. For now, I notice a general calmness and am sleeping well.*

*An unexpected result was that I stopped craving sweets after about a week of taking it! I didn't even realize this until I was grocery shopping and out of habit walked towards the ice cream – I stopped and realized I didn't want ice cream. So I walked toward the chocolate – same reaction. For once in my life, I was not craving sweets. I made truffles for a NYE party and only ate two. But what is really shocking is that the leftovers are still in my refrigerator two days later and I haven't touched them. I don't understand what is going on! Can this be the GABA Calm (active ingredients: magnesium, GABA, Glycine, L-Tyrosine, Taurine)? I don't think it's the*

*small amount of magnesium because I already do magnesium oil foot baths, so I suspect it's one of the other ingredients.*

I love that she was calm during her travels, was much calmer when visiting family and friends compared to last year and is even sleeping better. And she is clearly delighted about the lack of sugar cravings!

Here are my answers to her question about those sugar cravings:

- we can crave for many reasons and one reason can be due to low GABA levels
- we stress eat (or drink more wine or other alcoholic beverages) when our GABA levels are low
- by addressing the low GABA levels sugar cravings can disappear completely as in Melissa's case (ice-cream, chocolates and truffles)
- the GABA, glycine and taurine actively boost GABA, the magnesium is a co-factor for making GABA and the small amount of tyrosine counters the GABA so you don't feel too relaxed

In many cases GABA can help partially and you may also need to address low serotonin (if you have afternoon/evening cravings), low dopamine (if you crave sugar for focus and energy), low blood sugar (if you are cranky and have an intense desire for something sweet) or low endorphins (if you crave to self-soothe or comfort). Review the amino acid questionnaire so you can figure out if you may have low levels of any of the above brain chemicals. If you are low, using the correlating amino acids can address both mood issues and cravings.

You may also need to address candida, dysbiosis or parasites as these factors can also cause sugar cravings since many "bugs" feed off sugar. We cover all this in the interviews in The Anxiety Summit 5: Gut-Brain Axis so be sure to listen in. You'll even hear about a fascinating candida-serotonin connection which I came across recently.

As I mentioned above, addressing the gut issues can sometimes take some time to figure out. Until then, using an amino acid like GABA, provides quick relief and this is what you want.

### Sleeping through the night for the first time in many years: a trial and error approach to find the ideal tryptophan product



If you have trouble sleeping through the night (or even have anxiety or panic attacks), finding the nutritional/biochemical root causes and addressing them is going to provide relief but it's not always straightforward to find your root cause or causes (there are often more than one). Also, what works for you today may not work for you in 2 years time and may not work for your friend who has similar symptoms. You have to be a detective yourself and/or work with a health professional who can put all the puzzle pieces together.

I recently read a Facebook comment where someone was really frustrated about all the trial and error work that may be involved:

*I'm just so tired of all this trial and error work trying to figure out why I'm anxious and depressed and can't sleep more than 4 hours a night. It's been going on way too long. I just want answers and a solution to all this. Enough already!*

While I feel for this woman, I do acknowledge that it can sometimes be challenging to put all the puzzle pieces together. Other times we are able to figure things out very quickly. I'd like to share some feedback from Lorraine to illustrate how one small change made a big difference for her and it was a matter of trial and error. Lorraine shares her great results with this Tryptophan Complete tweak for her insomnia:

*Trudy, after listening to your talks about Lidtke Tryptophan I decided to give the Tryptophan Complete a try. I've taken one capsule each on the last two nights instead of two of the Tryptophan 500mg caps. Both nights I slept straight through all night and had a hard time*



*waking up in the morning. I've struggled with insomnia for many, many years. The 500mg Lidtke Tryptophan supplements were helping but I was still waking up during the night. For me to sleep all night is almost miraculous.*

*I've also been taking Progesterone (low on testing), Magnesium, L-Theanine and Melatonin.*

*I recently added phosphatidylserine, and Holy Basil because saliva testing showed high cortisol at bedtime and off the charts high in the morning. I'm hoping to start eliminating some of those other supplements now that I'm sleeping so well.*

*I want to thank you for the Anxiety Summits and your book and updates on Facebook and newsletters. I have learned so much from you!*

I've blogged about which product to use for boosting serotonin: Tryptophan 500mg or Tryptophan Complete (by Lidtke) and I share this: I like to have my clients do a trial of the amino acids so they can find the ideal dose for their needs and right now I still feel this would still be the best approach to take – using 500mg tryptophan. Once you have figured out you do well with tryptophan-only product and have your dose, then consider reducing it slightly after about 2-3 weeks and adding in additional Tryptophan Complete.

The other option is this: if you don't get the expected results with Tryptophan 500mg, then try the Tryptophan Complete. You may need the other ingredients for it to work well for you.

Lorraine chose to do the latter – switching to Tryptophan Complete – since she didn't get ideal results with Tryptophan 500mg and it worked for her. I will add that even though she slept straight through all night, I don't like that she had a hard time waking up in the morning and when that happens, I recommend less tryptophan. It's very possible that the ideal combination would be 1 x Tryptophan 500mg and 1 x Tryptophan Complete (my first suggestion).

Here is my quick commentary on the other products she's using for her insomnia:

- Progesterone and theanine: Testing progesterone levels are important before using progesterone. Both theanine and GABA support GABA production and when GABA is low, we often see low progesterone. With both low GABA and low progesterone, sleep and anxiety can be worse.
- Magnesium: This mineral is commonly low and is needed to make both serotonin and GABA.
- Melatonin: This is made in the body when there is sufficient serotonin and may not be needed long-term once she has good levels of serotonin (which the tryptophan product/s are helping her make).
- Phosphatidylserine and holy basil: High cortisol is a common root cause of both insomnia and anxiety and saliva testing is an excellent way to confirm this. Phosphatidylserine can be used to lower high cortisol although I have found even better results with a phosphorylated serine product called Seriphos. Holy basil or tulsi is an adaptogenic herbal product that provides adrenal support helping with sleep problems and easing anxiety and stress.

In Lorraine's case, her insomnia was caused by low serotonin (hence the need for tryptophan, melatonin and magnesium), low GABA/low progesterone (hence the need for progesterone, theanine

and magnesium) and high cortisol (hence the need for phosphatidylserine and holy basil).

She shares she's hoping to start eliminating some of these other supplements now that she's sleeping so well. So, this would be another trial and error approach, stopping and/or reducing one at a time and seeing how she does. Or she may well find she needs to continue with everything for some time.

As you can see, for Lorraine it was a matter of trial and error to find her solution, but it was well worth it to get the "miraculous results" she experienced: sleeping through the night for the first time in many years!

Some of these products may work for you but it's going to be a matter of trial and error to find your root cause/s and solution. In case they are relevant for you, most of the products mentioned here can all be found in my online supplement store (see link at the end of the document).

Coming back to the gut, if the amino acids like tryptophan, 5-HTP or GABA don't completely work to address the sleep issues then we know it's not only low serotonin and/or low GABA we are dealing with. Your practitioner can then ask these questions and help you address these issues:

- is there a gut issue i.e. is there candida, parasites and/or dysbiosis?
- are gluten or other grains an issue?
- was there accidental gluten exposure?
- are there other food sensitivities
- is SIBO/IBS and bloating/pain impacting sleep
- is caffeine or alcohol consumption a problem?
- is there EMF and WiFi exposure?
- are there medication side-effects?
- has there been mold exposure or some other environmental trigger?

You'll notice we cover most of these digestive issues in the summit interviews.

The good news is that trials of the amino acids (one at a time) – finding the ideal amount and combination for your unique needs - is a quick solution for better sleep (and any related mood and or/cravings issues).



### GABA helps Jenny's 11-year old daughter with irritability, focus/ADHD, anxiety & meltdowns



Jenny shared this wonderful feedback about her daughter who “hasn’t been diagnosed with ADHD but had a lot of ADHD symptoms”:

*We were having a huge amount of behavior problems as she is getting older (she's 11). I did some research and went to the health food store and bought a bottle. At this point I was mentally exhausted from all the fighting and drama at home and at school. I was desperate and didn't want to put her on any hard medication.*

*She has had amazing behavior at school and at home since giving it to her. She's almost like a different child. GABA has truly changed our life. She's been taking it for almost 2 months.*

What wonderful results! I'm thrilled for Jenny and her daughter. I asked Jenny to share what her daughter's symptoms/behaviors were before they used the GABA and which symptoms improved. This is what Jenny shared:

*...before the GABA she was irritable, she was fighting with her teacher and schoolmates, she couldn't focus and was distracted by anything and everything, she was constantly disrupting the class and she was throwing major tantrums over ridiculous stuff (like her hair didn't do what she wanted), she was mouthy and everything was a fight.*

*We are not seeing 99% of those behaviors at all anymore. She of course is still your typical pre-teen but if I say “no you can't have that” our “no you can't go there” her reaction is OK. Before it would have been a major fight or meltdown. Her teacher is reporting to me every day*

*about her wonderful days.*

I love hearing this feedback and it's not unusual for children to act out when they have low GABA levels. Adults may identify with being anxious, but children may appear irritable, unfocused and distracted, may have tantrums and meltdowns, and all the while not be able to articulate how they are feeling.

In this case, gut issues were not an issue for Jenny's daughter but digestive problems like constipation, tummy pain, candida, parasites and food sensitivities can often show up as anxiety, ADHD, rage, anger and other behavioral symptoms.

This is because digestive issues can lead to low levels of serotonin and GABA, and other key nutrients like zinc, iron, magnesium and low vitamin D (to name a few) - contributing to the anxiety.

As always, the amino acids – in this case GABA - offer the initial relief while you start to unwind the gut issues (as needed).

## Tyrosine for alleviating anxiety and panic attacks and creating a feeling of calm focus



If a client has anxiety, feels hugely stressed and was having panic attacks I would not think tyrosine would help! It's not the first approach I use with a client as I typically want to calm things down first by addressing the low serotonin symptoms of anxiety (such as worry, overwhelm, insomnia and panic attacks) and the low GABA physical symptoms of anxiety (physical tension, stiff and tense muscles, overwhelm and panic attacks).

However, for some individuals addressing low catecholamines with tyrosine is the best approach to take, even if it feels counter intuitive. Since everyone is different using the trial method is the best way to figure out what you need.

Here is a success story from someone using tyrosine:

*I've had great results with tyrosine also. When I first started taking amino acids for anxiety, insomnia and depression, I found that across the board, I needed to take all of them. But quickly, GABA began to cause me serious anxiety and it would bring on panic attacks, so I had to decrease it. I don't seem to need it any more except on rare occasions.*

*But tyrosine was a Godsend! It has cleared up my problems with focusing dramatically. Before tyrosine I would start to do one task only to completely forget that task and start another 1-2 minutes later and I would go in circles being busy, but not actually getting anything done. Before tyrosine I was also depressed with a kind of very sad apathy. I would get so overwhelmed that I would freak out. The tyrosine has cleared these symptoms up, too.*

*So, I am a big believer in the benefits of tyrosine. It's not for everyone, but you have to look at what symptoms you are having. Sadly, it is hard to find in health food stores. Hardly anyone seems to know it's benefits.*

I commented on her feedback about GABA causing anxiety and panic attacks – too much GABA (as with all the amino acids) can cause an opposite effect. I was curious how much she had used and asked:

*Ah yes. I just looked at the bottle of GABA powder that I have. It is 750 mg. for 1/4 teaspoon. I was actually taking 1/8 teaspoon. It makes me anxious and causes me to flush at that dose. So it looks like this is a much higher dose than you recommend to start.*

*P.S. I have sprinkled the tiniest amount on my nervous kitty's food and it has made her much calmer.*

She was probably using too much for her needs - 375mg is a high dose when I have clients start with 125mg and increase from there. It's very possible that low GABA wasn't her issue either.

I love that her nervous kitty benefited from the tiny amount of GABA. Anxious and nervous cats and dogs do quite well with the amino acids and other nutrients that support neurotransmitter production.

### GABA helps Katie's son with dental anxiety



Katie shares how happy she was that GABA helped her 8-year old son on a trip to the dentist:

*My 8-year old has some anxiety, OCD-like tendencies, and sensory processing issues. Going to the dentist is extremely difficult. They recommended full sedation, which I refused. Instead, I brought his GABA, Rescue Remedy, and essential oils. He got 2 cavities filled like a champ!*

*I had forgotten the GABA at first and he was struggling. I stopped the dentist, gave my son a GABA lozenge to dissolve in his mouth, and within 30 seconds he was calm. The dentist was SO impressed. It really does work! I'm so grateful I learned about it from you!*

GABA really does work this quickly – 30 seconds is not unusual – and this effectively and I was thrilled for this mom and her son. She also used essential oils and Rescue Remedy, both of which helped, but it was the GABA that finally calmed his nerves.

I like Source Naturals GABA Calm for kids and adults for the physical type of tension anxiety but Katie happened to use a 25mg GABA product by Kal. I really like that it's a nice low amount and that it uses what they call ActivMelt™ technology, so it melts in the mouth. Using GABA this way sublingually or opening a capsule of a GABA-only product and holding it in the mouth is the most effective way to use GABA.

Depending on sensitivity issues you may need to test it out and consider some of the other ingredients if you notice tummy upset or something else.

Because Source Naturals GABA Calm is my most popular and most effective form of GABA that I use with my clients – for kids and adults for the physical type of tension anxiety - here is additional



information about this product here and how I use it.

The product description from the Source Naturals site states:

*GABA Calm™ combines two of the main inhibitory neurotransmitters, GABA and glycine, with N-acetyl L-tyrosine, which is a precursor to the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine. In addition, taurine supports the calming effects of GABA. The lozenge form dissolves in the mouth for quick and convenient delivery.*

The GABA, glycine and taurine are calming and the N-acetyl L-tyrosine (which boosts the catecholamines and can be more stimulating) counters some of the calming effects so you have a nice balance.

A typical starting dose could look like this (if there are low GABA symptoms and after doing the initial trial):

- 1 x GABA Calm on waking
- 1 x GABA Calm mid-morning
- 1 x GABA Calm mid-afternoon

If this works well but you still have some anxiety, then you could try 2 each time and even 3 each time. When using with a child we want to start low and slowly increase. I'll have the mom start them on one quarter (or sometimes less) of the GABA Calm product and increase based on the trial and how their symptoms improve.

Since GABA Calm does contain tyrosine please be aware of these precautions. I don't have my clients use it in these instances:

- Overactive thyroid/Grave's disease
- Melanoma
- Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Bipolar disorder

I have my clients monitor their use of GABA Calm if they have

- High Blood pressure
- Migraine headaches

The amount of tyrosine in GABA Calm is so low blood pressure issues and headaches are typically not an issue.



**Since starting GABA my child sleeps for the first time in years and really notices a difference in his carb cravings**



**Since starting GABA  
my child sleeps for the first time in years  
and really notices a difference  
in his carb cravings**

In this success story, GABA, used as a supplement, helps a teenage boy sleep for the first time in years and also helps reduce his carbohydrate cravings. This boy's mom, Calle, shared their wonderful story with me:

*Got some GABA for our ASD [autism spectrum disorder] child. He has not slept well for years. We had tried all kinds of stuff. I am a healthcare pro and have studied and read and tried so much. But this stuff is a true miracle. For the first time in years my child sleeps. He sang and was all smiles from ear to ear for the first three days.*

And then she posted this a few days later (and how shocked they both were!):

*Our son has also really noticed a difference in his carb cravings since doing GABA. He went to grandma's house and was not tempted by 6 pies, tons of cookies, sweet rolls etc. We were both shocked. This is a kid who would mow through tons of cookies, rolls and pastries.*

There is no study on the use of GABA as a supplement for helping sleep problems in those individuals with ASD/autism spectrum disorder. But research shows that between 50% and 83% of individuals with ASD have sleep problems or disorders, often caused by GABA, serotonin and melatonin issues (the research link is on the blog).

If you're new to the amino acids here is a quick summary about GABA: low levels of GABA, a calming neurotransmitter typically leads to anxiety, fears and panic attacks, with the anxiety showing up as a physical kind of anxiety with muscle tension or muscle spasms. Low GABA levels can also

affect sleep especially when there is muscle tension. Folks often describe that they lie awake feeling stiff and tense. And as with all neurotransmitter deficiencies there is also the carb/sugar and/or alcohol (in adults) cravings as a way to self-medicate.

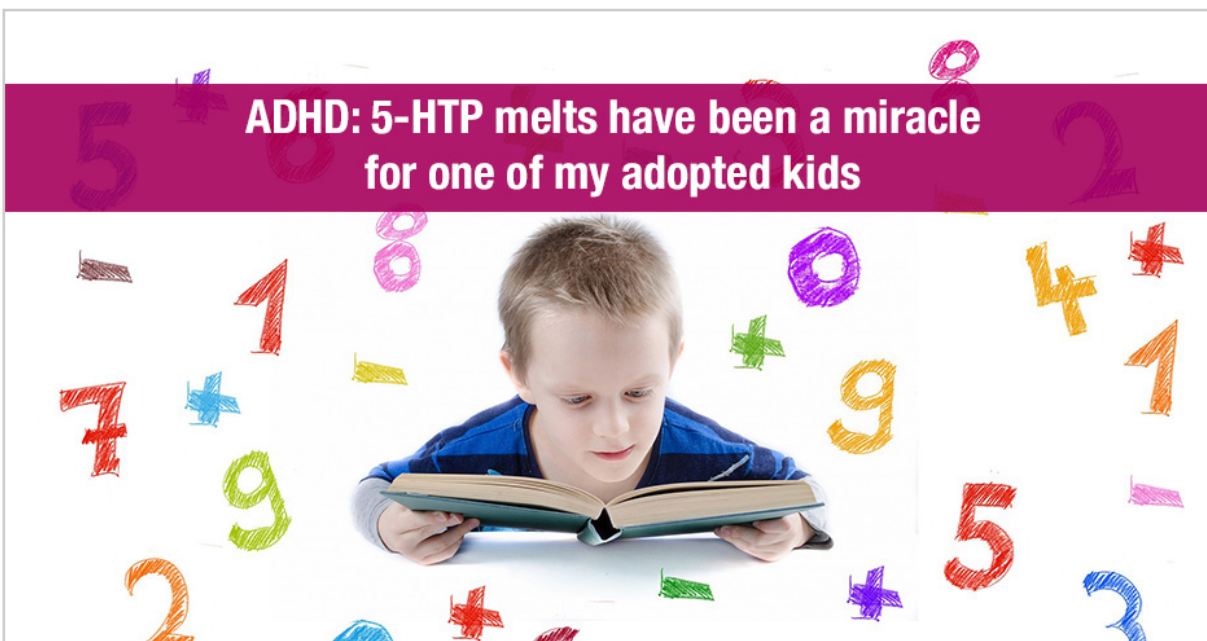
In this instance low GABA only resulted in sleep issues and carb cravings for Calle's son. No mention was made about anxiety but it's possible he was not able to articulate that he felt anxious. I don't know if Calle's son experienced tactile hypersensitivity (common in ASD) but if he did this may have factored in with his sleep issues.

In her comments Calle also shared this and it's so true: *"Healing is like learning to dance, you stumble, step on toes and learn to trust your body."*

I love getting feedback like this and am so happy for them! And I appreciate Calle for sharing her son's story and I'm sharing it here so you can see yet another way GABA can address symptoms and improve someone's life (and improve things for the rest of the family too). If her son can now sleep after years of sleep challenges then anything is possible.

Keep in mind that this story goes beyond a teenage boy with an ASD diagnosis who has sleep issues and craves carbs. It could be applicable to anyone – male or female, adult or child – who has low GABA levels that contribute to his/her sleep issues and carb cravings (and often physical anxiety symptoms too).

### ADHD: 5-HTP melts have been a miracle for one of my adopted kids



A mom in my community shared how 5-HTP melts have been a miracle for one of her adopted children – after one week! 5-HTP is not where I typically start with ADHD so I quizzed her to get more details and then went looking for the research to understand the mechanisms. This blog shares her rationale for using 5-HTP, the truly wonderful results her son experienced, some of the research and some possible serotonin/dopamine mechanisms. This is what she posted:

*5-HTP melts have been a miracle for one of my adopted kids. He had lots of trauma and off the charts ADHD. 5-HTP is better than methylphenidate (Ritalin) and we are now weaning off the non-stimulants.*

*Just 80mg 5-HTP in the morning is all he needs. He was super ADHD, he had a para (teacher's aide) in public school for years to keep him on track and this year at a school for ADHD the teachers were complaining that he was never on task.*

*Now after a week it has changed his life. I am so thankful for the anxiety summit. Thank you Trudy*

This is truly wonderful to hear! I responded saying how thrilled I was to hear the impact it was having and asked why this mom decided to try 5-HTP? This amino acid, which is a serotonin precursor, is not typically my first choice for alleviating ADHD symptoms. I consider low GABA (and using GABA) or low catecholamines (and using tyrosine), together with dietary changes, blood sugar control, and assessing for low zinc, low iron and low omega-3s – as a starting point.

I wanted to know if he had low serotonin symptoms such as the worry, ruminating, and obsessive type of anxiety which could have possibly been driving the ADHD symptoms? Were there any other

symptoms that were a clue that low serotonin may be a factor: insomnia (with fatigue the next day impacting focus) or sugar cravings in the afternoon/evening (causing blood sugar swings affecting focus and mood)?

This was her response about why she used 5-HTP and which low serotonin symptoms he had:

*We have tried all the amino acids over the years. I tried 5-HTP this time because SSRIs were the only class of medication he has not tried. I thought maybe it was worth a try and I also found this study: Comparative study of efficacy of 1-5-hydroxytryptophan and fluoxetine in patients presenting with first depressive episode (where the therapeutic efficacy of 5-HTP was considered as equal to that of the SSRI fluoxetine).*

*As for cravings or insomnia: he is a kid who loves sugar so I'm not sure if it's a craving or typical. He takes 0.3mg of melatonin each night because guanfacine, the non-stimulant, prevents the production of melatonin.*

She also mentioned that she has followed me for years and that DPA, an endorphin-boosting amino acid, works for her. She is a dietitian and shares my handouts and blog posts with her clients, so she clearly felt comfortable experimenting with the amino acids with her son.

I also asked which product they were using and how she landed at 80mg. She wanted a fast-acting supplement that would dissolve in his mouth and purchased Natrol 5-HTP:

*They are 100mg but we are breaking off a little because he was falling asleep in class.*

I reminded her that 5-HTP (or tryptophan) is typically best used late afternoon and evening so if someone is falling asleep in the day I'd switch to bedtime dosing. If he needs it during the day for the ADHD symptoms then reducing the dose is the smart thing to do.

I love the sublingual/melt aspect of this product for quick results and because children do so well with a product that tastes pleasant.

However, I do not recommend this particular product because of very mixed ingredients information online with regards to being gluten-free/soy-free and containing sucralose, artificial flavors and xylitol. This is all rather concerning and not acceptable.

What does this mean for this mom? Now that she has figured out that 5-HTP helps her son, it's best to find a better quality product so as not to cause other problems.

Research shows that some individuals with depression and anxiety experience impaired executive function (or ADHD) and serotonin support can improve this (study links on the blog).

I appreciate this mom for giving me permission to share so we can inspire hope (and I wish for more and more improvements for this young boy):

*My son is a 10-year old RAD (reactive attachment disorder) kid that was meth exposed and adopted at 3 years old. 5-HTP has worked so well. He has not thrown a fit in a month. Before fits were a daily occurrence. This might give hope to other parents.*

## Tryptophan ends TMJ pain, headaches and worry, and improves mood and sleep: a success story

**Tryptophan ends TMJ pain,  
headaches and worry,  
and improves  
mood and sleep:  
a success story**



In this success story, the amino acid tryptophan, taken as a supplement, ends TMJ (temporomandibular joint) pain and headaches in a woman in my community. She had the added benefits of an improved mood and less worrying and her sleep improved too.

Right after hearing me speaking on at the Trauma and Mind-Body Super Conference, Renee shared her wonderful success story on Facebook:

*Out of all the interviews I felt yours gave the most actionable steps. I was taking amitriptyline for TMJ and didn't like the side effects, however what other options did I have? Not many according to my GP [general practitioner]. Luckily I found your suggestion of tryptophan. And I can't explain how much of a change it made! I weaned off the medicine and took tryptophan instead and not only did it help the TMJ but also helped me feel more even emotionally.*

*I am being referred for trauma therapy and I am optimistic that I will be discomfort free soon.*

*So huge thanks for sharing your knowledge. It helped me at a time when I was really starting to think there were no 'natural' options and conventional meds were all I could take.*

I checked in with her, thanking her and acknowledging her wonderful feedback. I also asked how much tryptophan made this difference and how quickly she saw an improvement. And what side-effects she was seeing with the medication. She shared this:

*I am a week into taking tryptophan, and I'm taking 500mg. I saw improvements with the TMJ within an hour of taking it. My jaw felt loose and I had no headaches, I also felt more 'even'*



*mood wise. Like an underlying worry had gone. [worry is a classic symptom of low serotonin]*

*I also had some stress yesterday that usually would have made me crumble, but instead I was able to stand up for myself and see subjectively the extent of the issue and resolve it. I am amazed!*

*My original medication (amitriptyline) had given me extreme dry mouth, which I found hard to manage, the headaches were also not relieved as much as I had hoped, plus I was having sessions of palpitations.*

*I haven't had any palpitations from the day I started tryptophan whereas the dry mouth took some time to subside.*

These really are wonderful results and typical that we'd see results this quickly with tryptophan if the root cause of the TMJ and headaches is low serotonin. It can sometimes take a few weeks to find the ideal dose but Renee found it with the initial trial amount of 500mg.

The tryptophan also improved her sleep (and the palpitations and dry mouth side-effects from the medication stopped):

*I was struggling to get to sleep and stay asleep, suffering bouts of insomnia, prior to any medication. I am still sleeping well taking tryptophan which I am pleased about.*

She did however share that the timing of the tryptophan was making her too sleepy too early in the evening and she was planning to shift the timing:

*I am finding tryptophan is making me feel drowsy in the evening, so I am trying different times during the day to take it. Hopefully I can push back the tiredness to perhaps 8/9 at night to coincide with bedtime.*

My advice to her was that I have my clients use tryptophan MA (mid-afternoon) and evening and if MA makes them too sleepy they just do an evening dose. That can be enough for TMJ the next day. Sometimes more than 1 x 500mg in the evening is needed for easing TMJ and headache pain that night and the next day too.

I did check with her about weaning off the medication as cold-turkey quitting of psychiatric medications are dangerous and not advised. She shared this:

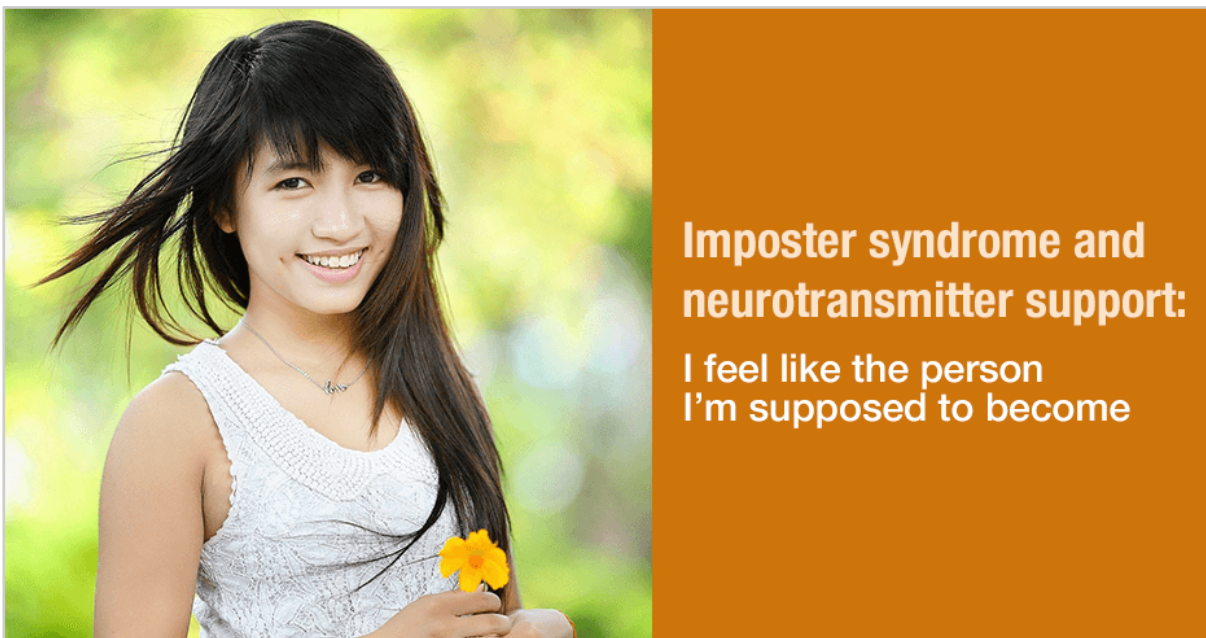
*I weaned off over 1 week, but I was only in it for 8 weeks in total before I found tryptophan.*

A slow taper under the guidance of the prescribing doctor is always recommended.

There is evidence to support the low serotonin connection to TMJ and pain like fibromyalgia and I share those research links on the actual blog.



## Imposter syndrome and neurotransmitter support: I feel like the person I'm supposed to become



A newly qualified nutritionist posted wonderful feedback on one of my imposter syndrome blogs. She shared how neurotransmitter support with tryptophan, tyrosine and GABA was her solution, eliminating her imposter syndrome and social awkwardness in 2 weeks. Here is the feedback Yo shared on the blog:

*Thanks for your work on neurotransmitters, Trudy. I am a fan. I had suffered BADLY from imposter syndrome at the end of my nutrition degree and I felt socially awkward in so many outings and situations. My anxiety and stress were through the roof! VERY bad sleep, I was stressed and my digestion was very poor.*

*Fast forward to a year later after addressing my sleep (no. 1 priority); stress levels; diet; loads of minerals; vitamin supplementation – my health started to shift for the better, but I still had the imposter syndrome hanging over my head.*

*What really tipped the balance was the supplementation of tyrosine, tryptophan & GABA. The imposter syndrome seemed to have vanished within two weeks. And it was in your blogs that had pointed out clues to the amino acids I was needing to supplement.*

*I feel like the person I'm supposed to become and I can't thank you enough for the amazing work you've been doing. I will definitely be following your journey, learning more about these neurotransmitters, and sharing this information so that others can benefit from it. Thank you, thank you!*

I thanked Yo for her kind words and for sharing this wonderful outcome. I always say we all deserve to feel our absolute best so I love that she says *“I feel like the person I’m supposed to become!”*

I also congratulated her on doing the foundational work first. As she discovered, even with all that in place, we often still have to address neurotransmitter imbalances with targeted amino acids too. With regards to imposter syndrome and the amino acids she used:

- Using tryptophan to address low serotonin eases worry, rumination, anxiety, negative self-talk, self-doubt and and not feeling capable – all of which we’d typically associate with imposter syndrome
- Using tyrosine to address low dopamine results in more motivation and better focus so you are more likely to finish tasks (and therefore feel more confident and capable). Many folks report a feeling of calm focus with tyrosine too
- Using GABA to address low GABA eases physical tension and overwhelm and helps stop unwanted thoughts.

A 2-week turnaround is fabulous and means she found the right combination of amino acids and ideal doses for her unique needs right away. I’ve seen results like this in 2 weeks but doing a new amino acid trial each week would usually take at least 3 weeks. I suspect her results were so fast because of the foundational work that was in place.

I typically start with amino acids trials on day one of working with someone, while we are working on diet, sleep, stress – this would have led to her feeling like the person she was meant to become much sooner and would have helped with sleep, stress and dietary changes too. Her approach worked but it took longer to get results.

### **GABA, DPA and glutamine help Susan quit gluten and sugar, eczema heals and anxiety/depression eases**



One of my clients, Susan, a thirty-one-year-old stay-at-home mother of three, had been suffering from worsening eczema for ten years. Her flare-ups had become increasingly unpleasant and were starting to affect her mood, her sleep, and, as she reported, her sanity. She was on medication for depression and had a problem with anxiety and terrible sugar cravings. Her diet was full of cookies, cakes, candies, and sugar in a variety of other forms.

In an attempt to control her eczema, she'd been using Benadryl daily for over ten years and had also tried cortisone creams and a wide range of other common treatments, but nothing helped. Her eczema had gotten so painful that she wasn't able to shower. And although Susan had been a competitive gymnast in her twenties and loved to exercise, she hadn't been able to because even the sweat on her skin was too painful.

All of her symptoms were driving her crazy, but it was the ugly and uncomfortable rashes around her eyes and on her chin, neck, and arms that finally motivated her to work with a nutritionist and try something new.

At my recommendation, she agreed to stop eating gluten for a two-week trial. She also supplemented with specific amino acids:

- D-phenylalanine (DPA) to help with her comfort-related food cravings
- glutamine to help with blood sugar control
- and GABA to help with her physical anxiety symptoms.

There was no change in her skin during the first week, but because of the amino acids her cravings for sugary foods diminished substantially, which helped her improve her diet a lot during that first week. She started eating plenty of vegetables and high-quality protein and had a breakfast smoothie every day and olive oil on her salads.

During our second appointment, we figured out that there was wheat in the whey protein powder she was using in her breakfast smoothie. She replaced it with whey that was gluten free, so during week two, her diet was truly gluten free. The results were nothing short of dramatic. Her eczema virtually disappeared, and for the first time in ages, she was sleeping through the night. During that second week, she took Benadryl only once and was able to shower each day.

She didn't really even need amino acids long term. She started taking less GABA and was eager to talk to her doctor about stopping her antidepressant medications—because she no longer felt depressed!

We also tested her reactions to gluten. Despite her many symptoms, all of the gluten-related tests came back negative, but she was feeling so much better that she decided to continue avoiding gluten anyway.

By the third week, she was starting to plan an exercise program and was thrilled about that. What a change in just a few short weeks. Susan said, *"I feel better than I have in ten years. I feel I can do anything again. This is me! I am so, so happy!"*

I checked in with her a few months later, and although her eczema still wasn't completely healed, it was under control. In addition, she had been able to quit taking antidepressants, had lost more than ten pounds, was working again, and was free from both anxiety and depression.

[the above is a success story I share in my book *The Antianxiety Food Solution*]

## Some cautionary notes

### Digestive Issues

From time to time I get feedback from individuals in my community saying GABA doesn't work for them for one reason or another. Digestive issues are a common problem and one question I often hear is the one about chewable GABA and gas, bloating and/or diarrhea.

Many of the chewable or sublingual forms of GABA contain sugar alcohols which can be problematic and cause digestive upset and often explosive diarrhea. Sugar alcohols include xylitol, sorbitol, mannitol and erythritol. Your reaction will depend on the amount of sugar alcohols used, how many chewable tablets you use and how accustomed you are to sugar alcohols. You may get used to them and eventually be fine with consuming small amounts and yet for others the tiniest amount is an issue.

I am also concerned with the "sweet" taste many of the chewable and sublinguals have, possibly contributing to an ongoing desire for eating and drinking other sweet treats in susceptible individuals.

Many of the chewable forms also contain natural flavors which could potentially be problematic for you.

I'm also starting to see more and more folks have digestive distress and gas from products with plant-based cellulose ingredients, especially when someone has IBS or SIBO (small intestinal bacterial overgrowth). For example, you may see hydroxypropylcellulose on the label. This helps the chewable keep its shape and stay intact longer when in the mouth.

With capsules you may see cellulose, methylcellulose or hypromellose on the "Other Ingredients" section on the label, with these vegetable-based ingredients replacing the gelatin capsule. This also often causes bloating and gas when IBS/SIBO is an issue.

The rice flour filler in many products can also be problematic for some folks with IBS/SIBO.

### Headaches

Despite the above potential digestive issues, Source Naturals GABA Calm is the GABA product I most often recommend initially because it works so well, is convenient and is sublingual. The small amount of tyrosine may cause headaches. If this is the case, a switch to a GABA-only product or a GABA-theanine product may be what is needed.

It's always important to also review the amino acid precautions (see below) before use. If you have migraines, tyrosine may make them worse.

But I do want to also add that some folks cannot tolerate 500mg tyrosine at all and yet they do just fine with 25mg of tyrosine in the GABA Calm product (and sometimes up to 75mg of tyrosine when three GABA Calm lozenges are needed at once).



### Amino acids: General precautions

There are some precautions to be aware of when taking supplemental amino acids. I review all of the following with my clients before starting any trials of amino acids.

General: avoid if sensitive to supplements, liver/kidney issues, ulcer, pregnant /nursing

Tryptophan:

- Avoid: MAO inhibitor; more than 1 SSRI
- Watch: 1 SSRI (6 hours apart, doctor approval); asthma

GABA

- Watch: low blood pressure

Tyrosine:

- Avoid: overactive thyroid/Grave's disease; PKU; melanoma
- Watch: high blood pressure; migraines; bipolar disorder

Glutamine:

- Watch: bipolar disorder; active cancer (oncologist approval)

### Additional information on Amino Acids and SSRIs

If you're currently taking a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) or monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), don't take either 5-HTP or tryptophan unless you're working with a knowledgeable practitioner. Taking 5-HTP or tryptophan with either of these classes of antidepressants may cause serotonin syndrome, an adverse reaction characterized by agitation, confusion, rapid heart rate, and blood pressure fluctuations.

If you experience these symptoms, stop taking 5-HTP or tryptophan immediately.

When I have clients who are taking a single SSRI who might also benefit from tryptophan or 5-HTP, I have them take the amino acid six hours apart from their medication—after obtaining approval from their doctor and with their doctor monitoring for adverse reactions. Please do the same.

The interview with Dr. Achina Stein, **SSRIs: microbiome impact and safe tapering**, is very relevant if you have been prescribed an antidepressant and are working with your doctor on tapering. She shares her valuable perspectives on using tryptophan and 5-HTP when prescribed an SSRI.



## The amino acids and gut health

There are many direct applications for the amino acids when it comes to gut health issues too:

- GABA has a gastroprotective effect after alcohol ingestion (animal study)
- Slow-release 5-HTP improves motility and eases depression in IBS (animal study)
- DPA boosts endorphins to improve mood after accidental gluten exposure
- GABA helps relax throat spasms with vagus nerve issues
- Serotonin/tryptophan has antifungal properties against a number of candida species
- GABA is implicated in chronic visceral gastrointestinal pain
- Low serotonin and low GABA symptoms are common in IBS/SIBO
- GABA offers liver protection after toxic exposure to fluoride (animal study)
- Tryptophan helps ease the fear about a new protocol in SIBO clients/patients
- GABA helps ease rectal spasms/proctalgia fugax
- Glutamine is healing for a leaky gut (and can also be calming for many individuals)
- Sugar disrupts the microbiome and all the amino acids help to end sugar addiction/cravings (with no need for willpower or white-knuckling it and no feelings of deprivation)
- Glutamine supports the gut microbiome and reduces inflammation
- DPA, glutamine and 5-HTP help alleviate alcohol withdrawal symptoms (important because of the harmful effects of alcohol on the gut)
- GABA, theanine and DPA may enhance immunity under stressful conditions
- Collagen is often used for improving gut health/healing leaky gut and yet it can cause low serotonin and increased anxiety, depression and insomnia in susceptible individuals

We discuss all of this with studies, cases and clinical observations and more in my summit interviews, **Tryptophan & GABA and gut-brain connections**, and **Glutamine/DPA/Tyrosine for Anxiety & Sugar Cravings**, and throughout the summit.

Of course, we also make GABA, serotonin and other neurotransmitters in the gut, and this and the mechanisms are highlighted in a number of interviews.

We do an entire interview on the collagen-low serotonin topic and how tryptophan or 5-HTP can help: **Collagen Can Cause Anxiety & Insomnia**.

## The amino acid products I use with clients

Instead of listing the actual amino acid products I use with my clients and those doing my online group programs, I'm going to refer you to the supplements blog because product formulations change and the blog has the most current information.

Here is a summary of the products:

- GABA and theanine products for low GABA symptoms (physical tension/anxiety, insomnia and crave sugar and/or alcohol when stressed)
  - GABA helps to raise low GABA symptoms; theanine supports low GABA too (and low serotonin and low dopamine to some extent).
  - My two favorite products right now are Source Natural GABA Calm and Nutritional Fundamentals for Health GABA-T SAP.
  - I find GABA (and theanine) to be most effective when taken sublingually or opened on to the tongue.
  - I find GABA to be more effective than pharmaGABA for most of my clients but there are some folks who seem to do very well with pharmaGABA.
- Tryptophan and 5-HTP products for low serotonin symptoms (worry, anxiety, rumination, ruminations, negativity, insomnia, PMS, afternoon and evening sugar/carb cravings)
  - Tryptophan and/or 5-HTP can help to raise low serotonin.
  - My most popular and favorite tryptophan product is by Lidtke.
  - I typically recommend starting with tryptophan and don't recommend 5-HTP if you have high cortisol as it can raise cortisol.
  - Some people do better on tryptophan and some do better on 5-HTP.
- DPA for low endorphin symptoms (comfort and reward eating, weepy, pain issues)
  - DPA or D-Phenylalanine helps to raise endorphins and eliminates the comfort/reward-eating and the feelings of "I deserve this" and LOVING certain foods.
  - My most popular and favorite DPA product is made by Lidtke and called Endorphigen.
  - Opening up the DPA capsule is very effective (and some of my clients find it tastes like dark chocolate).
- Tyrosine for low dopamine (tired, blahs, poor focus, low motivation, need coffee or soda or sugar for focus/mood/energy)
  - Tyrosine helps to raise low dopamine (one of the catecholamines)
  - I don't have a favorite tyrosine brand but always recommend buying all supplements from a professional grade company, such as the ones listed on my supplements blog.

- Glutamine for low blood sugar symptoms (cranky, irritable, anxious, intense sweet cravings at any time)
  - Glutamine helps with blood sugar stability, heals the gut and can be calming too.
  - It also helps with intense sugar cravings at any time and is best used opened onto the tongue for this purpose. Using a powdered product works well too.
  - I don't have a favorite glutamine brand but always recommend buying all supplements from a professional grade company, such as the ones listed on my supplements blog.

Here is the link to the supplements blog:

<https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/amino-acids-pyroluria-supplements/>

## This ebook is a companion document

This ebook is a companion document to be used with the summit interviews. As I said above, I mention the amino acids and neurotransmitters in all the gut interviews and take a deeper dive in my three amino acid interviews (I have colleagues interview me):

- **GABA & Tryptophan: The Gut-Anxiety Connections**
- **Glutamine/DPA/Tyrosine for Anxiety & Sugar Cravings**
- **Collagen Can Cause Anxiety and Insomnia**

### GABA & Tryptophan: The Gut-Anxiety Connections

Here is a high-level summary from my first interview, **GABA & Tryptophan: The Gut-Anxiety Connections**, where I connect the gut-anxiety dots. Every day I'm in awe of the wide applications for the amino acids and the growing research in this area!

I start with an overview of the amino acids and symptoms and why it is so important to first address low serotonin symptoms i.e. fear, worry, phobias, overwhelm, negative self-talk and imagining the worst.

Then I cover some of the recent research on tryptophan (and 5-HTP) as it relates to both gut health and anxiety:

- 5-HTP and motility/depression (also discussed in the SIBO interviews)
- low serotonin and gut health in anorexia (we also talk about this in Dr. Peter Bongiorno's interview, **The Gut-Brain Axis and Mental Health**)
- candida and serotonin
- collagen, gut health and increased anxiety (I touch on this here and also do an entire interview on this topic - **Collagen Can Cause Anxiety & Insomnia**)
- CBD and serotonin/tryptophan

We also cover GABA applications and research related to the gut and anxiety/sleep:

- IBS and visceral pain
- throat spasms with vagus nerve issues (with more in the **Vagus Nerve Activation** interview with Dr. Navaz Habib)
- burning mouth syndrome and rectal spasms
- GABA and unwanted thoughts
- GABA and theanine mixture/combo

I talk about exciting new updates on the most common question I get – *“how can GABA possibly work – it doesn't get through the blood brain barrier or does it only work if we have a leaky blood*

*brain barrier?”* (with more on this in Dr. Kharrazian’s fabulous interview, **Fix the Brain to Fix the Gut**).

I share updates on the phenibut FDA ban and I also share some possible reasons why one or more of the amino acids don’t work as well as expected (when you do the questionnaire and you have all the symptoms).

We end with practical steps for using amino acids and some wonderful results folks have experienced. I also share when I start using the amino acids when someone does have gut issues like dysbiosis, candida, malabsorption, low stomach acid, gluten issues, toxin exposure and everything else covered on the summit.

I’m pretty sure you know that answer – we start using them from day 1!

### Glutamine/DPA/Tyrosine for Anxiety & Sugar Cravings

In my second interview, **Glutamine/DPA/Tyrosine for Anxiety & Sugar Cravings**, I also cover some of the basics around amino acids and neurotransmitters.

We then take a deep dive into each of these areas:

- glutamine for low blood sugar type anxiety and irritability and also gut healing
- DPA for low endorphins where you experience emotional pain and physical pain
- tyrosine for low dopamine/catecholamines where you have low energy, poor motivation and ability to focus (and also when you need the feeling of calm focus)

We also talk about how sugar addiction is very real and how it impacts the microbiome (and hence all the brain chemicals and the gut-brain axis), how it has a direct impact on serotonin and on areas of the brain involved in learning and motivation.

I share how each of the above also helps with sugar cravings (and the very different types of cravings we see with low blood sugar, low endorphins and low dopamine) and actually breaking the sugar or carb addiction, with no need for willpower or white-knuckling it! And no feelings of deprivation.

In each of the above 3 areas I also cover symptoms and how to use the respective amino acids, share case studies and recent research.

And we tie the sugar addiction aspect back to these related interviews:

- **Sugar/fructose addiction: anxiety, ADHD and aggression** with - Mike Collins (because we must understand the addictive nature of sugar, how it’s so much part of our lives and why community is as important as balancing brain chemistry)
- **Thiamine Deficiency in Anxiety and Gut Health** with Chandler Marrs (because sugar, carbs, processed foods, coffee and alcohol all deplete thiamine).
- **The Biology of Trauma and the Freeze Response** - with Amie Apigian (she interviews me and shares that individuals in the chronic freeze state often have low endorphins)



### Collagen Can Cause Anxiety and Insomnia

And in my third interview, **Collagen Can Cause Anxiety and Insomnia**, I share:

- the mechanisms and research showing how collagen and gelatin can lead to tryptophan depletion, lowering serotonin and making anxiety, insomnia and depression worse, or even causing symptoms where you feel you have everything resolved
- who may be more susceptible to these serotonin-lowering effects
- other possible mechanisms like dietary oxalates issues, problems with glutamates, arginine, glyphosate and histamine
- insights about bone broths causing similar issues
- and when to use tryptophan or 5-HTP to get the benefits and prevent issues

It's important to be aware of all of the above because collagen, gelatin, and bone broths are frequently recommended and used for healing a leaky gut.

If all of this feels very overwhelming, and you feel fearful and worried about where to start, don't forget my advice about addressing low serotonin first (I talk about this here: **GABA & Tryptophan: The Gut-Anxiety Connections.**) If you feel physical tension and overwhelm, a trial of GABA may be worth considering too.

### Simple Solutions for Anxiety and Gut Health

Don't forget my final interview, **Simple Solutions for Anxiety and Gut Health**, where you'll learn about moisturizing, multi-tasking and doing nothing, getting out in nature and forest bathing, laughter, smiling, smelling and pooping well. And hear about watching alcohol intake (i.e. social drinking), tattoos, hair dye, pet products, and much more.

And finally, you can slowly but surely start to address everything else gut-related that may be contributing to your anxiety, and recognize how your anxiety may be impacting your gut – after listening to the relevant summit interviews.

## This is a growing field: amino acids and neurotransmitters

Just like the gut-brain axis research is growing, the research into amino acids and neurotransmitters is growing too. The summit includes much new research. I'm a bit of a research geek so we highlight at least 1 or 2 papers (and sometimes more) in each interview.

This relatively new GABA review paper, **An Updated Review on Pharmaceutical Properties of Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid**, didn't get a mention in any of the summit interviews, so I want to share the abstract here for you, to illustrate the many additional applications that are being identified for GABA, outside of anxiety, insomnia, pain and gut issues:

*Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) is a non-proteinogenic amino acid that is widely present in microorganisms, plants, and vertebrates. So far, GABA is well known as a main inhibitory neurotransmitter in the central nervous system. Its physiological roles are related to the modulation of synaptic transmission, the promotion of neuronal development and relaxation, and the prevention of sleeplessness and depression [and anxiety].*

*Besides, various pharmaceutical properties of GABA on non-neuronal peripheral tissues and organs were also reported due to anti-hypertension, anti-diabetes, anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammation, anti-microbial, anti-allergy, hepato-protection, reno-protection, and intestinal protection.*

*Therefore, GABA may be considered as potential alternative therapeutics for prevention and treatment of various diseases.*

It's really exciting to be working in this area of "nutritional psychiatry"! I love using what I learn to help more folks with anxiety and to help practitioners who work with folks with anxiety!

## Wrapping up and the power of community/sharing

Many of these success stories (and others) can be found on my blog and if a particular topic is of interest to you, please come and check them out (links are posted below), read questions from folks in my community and feedback from my other wonderful blog readers and ask your questions. And please do come back and share your results. It's how we all learn and support each other!

As you will hear in Misty William's wonderful interview - **Self-Advocating and the Power of Community** - asking for help, sharing and being part of a community is so special and really important in your healing journey.

As mentioned above, if you are already part of my community and have read some of these stories in my newsletter and on the blog, hopefully reading some of this all in one place and in the context of the gut-brain axis, and anxiety and digestive health will help you even more.

If you are part of my community and you shared your story (or your child's story), thank you for allowing me to share on the blog and here.

If you are new to my community and are reading these stories for the first time, I do hope you have found them to be enlightening, educational and inspiring. Be sure to read them in the context of the gut-brain axis, and anxiety and digestive health too. And I welcome you to my community!

May this and everything you learn on this summit be a *bouquet of hope* for you!

To calm and excellent health!

Trudy

Trudy Food Mood Expert, Certified Nutritionist  
Author, *The Antianxiety Food Solution*  
Host of *The Anxiety Summit*



## Additional resources

- My blog is currently EveryWomanOver29 and will be moving over to Anxiety Nutrition Solutions in the near future. I work primarily with women but the amino acids work for men and children too. Here is the blog: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/>
- Amino Acids Mood Questionnaire from The Antianxiety Food Solution: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/amino-acids-mood-questionnaire-from-the-antianxiety-food-solution/>
- The Antianxiety Food Solution Amino Acid and Pyroluria Supplements: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/amino-acids-pyroluria-supplements/>
- The Anxiety Summit 5: all the speakers and topics: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/anxiety-summit-season-5-articles/>
- GABA for both easing anxiety and stopping sugar cravings: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/gaba-for-ending-sugar-cravings-and-anxiety-and-insomnia/>
- Sleeping through the night for the first time in many years: a trial and error approach to find the ideal tryptophan product: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/sleeping-through-the-night-for-the-first-time-in-many-years-a-trial-and-error-approach-to-find-the-ideal-tryptophan-product/>
- GABA for helping Jenny's 11-year old daughter with irritability, focus issues, ADHD, anxiety and meltdowns: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/gaba-children-adhd-focus-issues-irritability-anxiety-tantrums/>
- Tyrosine for alleviating anxiety and panic attacks and creating a feeling of calm focus: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/tyrosine-for-alleviating-anxiety-and-panic-attacks-and-creating-a-feeling-of-calm-focus/>
- GABA helps Katie's son with dental anxiety: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/gaba-rescue-remedy-essential-oils-for-eliminating-dental-anxiety/>
- Since starting GABA my child sleeps for the first time in years and really notices a difference in his carb cravings: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/since-starting-gaba-my-child-sleeps-for-the-first-time-in-years-and-really-notices-a-difference-in-his-carb-cravings/>
- ADHD: 5-HTP melts have been a miracle for one of my adopted kids: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/adhd-5-htp-melts-have-been-a-miracle-for-one-of-my-adopted-kids/>
- Tryptophan ends TMJ pain, headaches and worry, and improves mood and sleep: a success story: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/tryptophan-ends-tmj-pain-headaches-and-worry-and-improves-mood-and-sleep-a-success-story/>
- Imposter syndrome and neurotransmitter support: I feel like the person I'm supposed to become: <https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/imposter-syndrome-and-neurotransmitter-support-i-feel-like-the-person-im-supposed-to-become/>

If you are looking for guidance on how to use GABA for your own anxiety:

- If you are new to the amino acids (and other anxiety nutrition solutions like gluten/sugar/caffeine removal, blood sugar control, gut health, pyroluria etc.) my book, *The Antianxiety Food Solution: How the Foods You Eat Can Help You Calm Your Anxious Mind, Improve Your Mood and End Cravings*, is a great place to start. It's a comprehensive approach - amino acids AND diet. Become informed before you start using them or work with a practitioner who can guide you. It's heavily referenced so share it with your practitioner too.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/the-antianxiety-food-solution-by-trudy-scott/>

- **GABA Quickstart program - Using GABA for Easing Physical Anxiety.** This is an online group program where you'll learn how to use the amino acid GABA to ease physical anxiety, tension, stress-eating and self-medicating with alcohol to relax.

We cover: How to identify low GABA symptoms; GABA facts and the blood brain barrier myth; Most effective GABA products (and what to avoid); How to do a trial to find out how much you need for your unique biochemistry; Clinical pearls and how to use GABA for the quickest results; Precautions and troubleshooting when you don't get expected results; How using GABA fits into your overall nutritional plan and using the other amino acids; and more.

The program includes a Facebook group and Q & A calls so you can ask your questions and connect with others in similar situations.

You can find out more here: <https://www.anxietynutritioninstitute.com/gabaquickstart/>

If you are a practitioner and would like to learn how to incorporate the amino acids in your practice:

- If you are new to the amino acids (and other anxiety nutrition solutions like gluten/sugar/caffeine removal, blood sugar control, gut health, pyroluria etc.) my book, *The Antianxiety Food Solution: How the Foods You Eat Can Help You Calm Your Anxious Mind, Improve Your Mood and End Cravings*, is a great place to start. It's a comprehensive approach - amino acids AND diet. Many practitioners use it as an initial learning resource (it's heavily referenced) and also recommend it to their clients/patients.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.everywomanover29.com/blog/the-antianxiety-food-solution-by-trudy-scott/>

- **Balancing Neurotransmitters - the Fundamentals.** Incorporating the amino acids into your practice and using an amino acid like GABA or tryptophan offers quick relief from anxiety for your clients or patients. This will allow you to focus on addressing the gut issues and other root causes that are contributing to their anxiety (and other health issues). It will also make it so much easier for them to make the necessary dietary changes because of the reduction in cravings for sugar, carbs, gluten, grains etc.

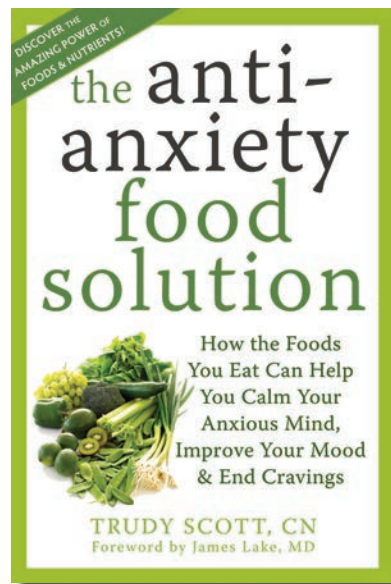
This is an online group program that includes a Facebook group so you can ask your questions and collaborate with other practitioners.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.anxietynutritioninstitute.com/balancingneurotransmitters/>



## About Trudy



Food Mood Expert Trudy Scott is a certified nutritionist who educates anxious individuals about nutritional solutions for anxiety. She is known for her expertise in the use of targeted individual amino acids, nutritional solutions for the social anxiety condition called pyroluria, and the harmful effects of benzodiazepines.

Trudy is the author of *The Antianxiety Food Solution: How the Foods You Eat Can Help You Calm Your Anxious Mind, Improve Your Mood and End Cravings* and host of *The Anxiety Summit*, an online educational platform for both consumers and health professionals, and dubbed “a bouquet of hope”. Trudy also educates health professionals via the Anxiety Nutrition Institute, sharing research and practical how-to steps.

Trudy is passionate about sharing the powerful food mood connection because she experienced the results first-hand, finding complete resolution of her anxiety and panic attacks.

## Disclaimer

The information provided in The Anxiety Summit 5 via this document, the interviews, the blog posts, the website, the audio files, the videos and transcripts, the comments and all other means, is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professional. You should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any diet, exercise, or supplementation program, before taking or stopping any medication, or if you have or suspect you may have a health problem.