

# alternative

THE ART & SCIENCE OF HEALTHY LIVING

100

medicine

## ■ healthy SOLUTIONS

### 1 Anxiety

In any given year, 18 percent of Americans suffer from an anxiety disorder, while scores more feel stressed by work or family demands. This, in turn, can lead to insomnia, weakened immunity, high blood pressure, and other health problems.

#### Conventional Rx:

Doctors have a slew of anti-anxiety medications to jot on their scrip pads, including Paxil and Valium. "But these drugs are often not just ineffective—they are also rife with side effects, such as addiction, sedation, and sexual dysfunction," cautions Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, the medical director of the Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers of America and au-

thor of *Pain Free 1-2-3: A Proven Program to Get You Pain Free!* (McGraw-Hill, 2006).

#### Natural Rx:

Find peace of mind with L-theanine, an amino acid found in green tea and "an outstanding treatment for anxiety," says Teitelbaum. "One of the greatest benefits of L-theanine is that you can use it without becoming sedated or lethargic in the process."

L-theanine works in a couple ways, according to Teitelbaum. First, it directly stimulates the production of alpha brain waves, which are associated with a relaxed-but-alert state of mind, similar to the state meditation achieves. Secondly, he explains, L-theanine is involved in the formation of the neurotransmitter GABA, which calms you while you're awake but deepens sleep at night. "L-theanine also naturally stimulates the release of the 'happiness molecules' serotonin and dopamine." One study earlier this year, conducted by researchers at the Program in Cognitive Neuroscience at the City University in New York, found that by boosting people's alpha brain waves, L-theanine helped people stay more focused and responsive while performing mundane tasks. Teitelbaum suggests 50 to 200 mg of the Suntheanine brand a few times a day.

*The L-theanine in green tea, including matcha (left), calms anxiety.*

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