

Beating Stress Through Nutrition



For most of us, stress and food go hand-in-hand. Food can give us the feelings of power, control and satisfaction that we need in stressful situations. It's no surprise that when our stress levels go up our resistance to 'comfort' foods goes down. This isn't always a bad thing – our favorite foods actually can reduce our stress levels. But moderation is key. Giving your body the nutrition it needs is a positive step you can take every day toward combating stress. With the correct nutrition, you are better prepared to face the challenges of the day.



- **Breakfast.** Aim always to eat breakfast, even if you can only manage a piece of fruit. Fruit smoothies make a great choice for breakfast. They can be made with various combinations of fruits and with or without yogurt. Be adventurous by adding vegetables or spices.
- **Lunch and the evening meal.** Healthy options include baked potatoes with baked beans or tuna, sushi, vegetable soup, whole-grain sandwiches or salads. In restaurants, baked fish or chicken with vegetables are good choices. Or go for pasta with a tomato-based sauce.
- **In-between.** To sustain your energy, snack on healthy food throughout the day. This calls for a little planning. Bring a banana, yogurt, nuts and raisins, a few oatcakes or a bagel to work to have handy.
- **Drinks.** Cut down on stimulants such as coffee, tea, and soda as much as you can. Trade them for decaffeinated coffee or tea, 100 percent fruit juice and herb teas. Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration and protect your kidneys.
- **Alcohol.** Alcohol supplies little to no nutrients. Women should have no more than seven alcoholic drinks a week, and men no more than 14. Attempt to match each alcoholic drink with a glass of water or juice.
- **Supplements.** Consider a vitamin and mineral supplement to replace the nutrients depleted by stress, particularly the B vitamins, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium and zinc. Herbal supplements to aid digestion include licorice root, aloe vera, lemongrass and kava kava. Mint, dandelion, fennel, ginger, slippery elm and meadowsweet teas help digestion.

