

Taking Care of Yourself Nutritionally During Times of Stress

One of the easiest ways to take care of yourself in times of stress is to examine your eating habits. The quality of your nutrition choices is a crucial to the quality of your health. It fights off chronic diseases, helps you manage your weight, and provides you with the energy you need to meet your day-to-day responsibilities.

Eat for All-Day Energy

To keep your energy lasting all day long, create meals that are a mix of protein, complex carbs and fat. Your body converts food into energy at different rates, so eating a complete, balanced diet is important to keeping you satisfied and energy levels elevated.

Another way to keep your energy up is with healthy snacks. Research from the *Nutrition Journal* found that a protein-filled snack, like yogurt, or nuts, keeps you full longer than consuming a high carbohydrate or high fat snack.

Monitor your Caffeine Intake

While caffeine in moderation can be a good energy booster, excessive consumption can lead to anxiety. Instead opt for water! Dehydration can lead to headaches, anxiety, and poor concentration. The body is composed of 60% water. To keep hydrated, aim for 6-to-8 glasses of water per day.

Consume Foods that Fight Inflammation

Stress can do a number on your body by increasing internal inflammation, which can damage internal organs. Fight back by consuming antioxidant rich foods, such as berries and dark leafy green vegetables. Omega-3 rich foods (tuna and salmon) also combat inflammation.



Reach for the Vitamin C

Foods high in Vitamin C such as citrus can reduce stress and boost the immune system. These foods can also reduce cortisol levels (a stress hormone) as well as blood pressure.

Don't Forget Magnesium

An optimal intake of magnesium helps to avoid headaches and fatigue. Magnesium is also linked to increasing quality of sleep in adults. Sources include leafy green vegetables, black beans, whole wheat, edamame and avocado.

Plan Your Day of Meals

Eating healthy in stressful times isn't easy. Try to prioritize and plan ahead of time. Pick your least busy day of the week and prepare 7 days of healthy meals and snacks. Cook easy foods in batches, such as chicken, rice, and vegetables, to ensure you have healthy food at your disposal. Keep a good supply of fruit on hand.