

Your Guide to Managing Stress Through Diet

Provided by Kimberly Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD, Program Director, Holistic Nutrition Services
Author of *Challenge Cancer and Win! Step-by-step nutrition action plans for your specific cancer*

For more information: www.challengecancer.com

Did you know that what you eat can actually decrease your body's ability to cope with the effects of stress or add to your stress? Too much food, the wrong kind of food, unstable eating patterns and nutritional deficiencies can put excessive demands on the body and weaken your immune system.

While you may not be able to control what is causing your stress, you can control what you put into your mouth. Changing your eating habits, along with exercise and relaxation, can help you cope with stress more positively. Here are some step-by-step guidelines of how to eat for less stress:

Step One: Eat to support your adrenal glands.

These glands are responsible for "rebalancing" our body during stressful times and need potassium, vitamin B6, vitamin C, pantothenic acid and magnesium to do their job. A varied diet rich in citrus fruits, potatoes, peppers, beans, nuts, salmon and whole grains will help to ensure adequacy of these nutrients.

Step Two: Decrease your sugar intake.

This includes refined carbohydrates! Having a sweet tooth depletes the body of many nutrients, in particular the B vitamins, which are necessary for carbohydrate metabolism. Many of the B vitamins just happen to have important roles in nerve function. Additionally, big doses of sugar can decrease white blood cell production.

Step Three: Avoid dietary stimulants.

Now is the time to break the habit of a morning coffee ritual. Caffeinated drinks like tea, coffee and chocolate milk encourage the production of adrenaline, leading to overworked adrenals.

Step Four: Consider dietary supplementation.

If the adrenal glands become exhausted as a result of constant demand for adaptation, you may want to consider whole adrenal glandular extracts. The dosage will depend on the quality of the product and your body's response to it. Additional antioxidants like vitamin E and selenium and herbals like ginseng may be helpful. Talk with your nutritionist to devise an anti-stress dietary supplement regimen for you.