

Stress Relief through Nutrition: You're Never Too Busy for Good Nutrition!

As we get busy and stressed, we tend to make poor nutritional choices that can actually increase our stress levels and cause other problems.

- 1. Eat Breakfast**
- 2. Opt for Green Tea:** You can reduce your stress levels and improve your mental performance throughout the day if you gradually wean yourself off of large amounts of caffeine. One way is to replace coffee with decaffeinated green tea, which has a soothing taste and the added benefit of antioxidants.
- 3. Try Sparkling Juice or Perrier:** Replace soda with sparkling fruit juice, or sparkling water. This will help by adding water to your system, rather than detracting it (caffeine saps your system of water, so drinking it is akin to *un*-drinking water), and you'll be avoiding other caffeine-related side effects.
- 4. Carry a Snack:** Handy healthy snacks can help you avoid blood sugar level dips and accompanying mood swings and fatigue.
- 5. Healthy Munchies:** If you are too stressed out and need to munch, choose healthy snacks instead of junk food. The happier your body, the better your mind.
- 6. Brown Bag It:** Make your own lunch a few times a week, to save money and to improve your health. By brown bagging it, you'll be reducing your intake of fatty oils and MSG (monosodium glutamate), a food enhancer that is found in most outside foods.
- 7. No Caffeine after 2pm:** Caffeine has a six-hour half life; therefore it will interfere with sleep at night if consumed close to bedtime.
- 8. Banish the Bad Stuff:** Avoid having junk food in the house. Easy access means more opportunities and temptations to eat junk.
- 9. Stock Your Home with Healthy Fare:** The best way is to plan a menu of healthy meals and snacks at the beginning of each week, list the ingredients you'll need, and shop for everything once a week.
- 10. Tension Tamers:** Adopting stress reducing techniques should also reduce your stress-induced cravings for unhealthy or excessive food. Activities such as yoga, martial arts, journaling, laughter, and PMR (progressive muscle relaxation) are offered by many city recreation centers or gyms.

Informational Help Sites for Stress Management

1. [University of Georgia, Health Center](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/stress) (www.uhs.uga.edu/stress)
2. [AIS-American Institute of Stress](http://www.stress.org) (www.stress.org)
3. [MedicineNet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com/stress/index.htm) (www.medicinenet.com/stress/index.htm)

References

1. [Stress and Nutrition](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/stress) (http://www.uhs.uga.edu/stress)
2. [Stress Diet](http://www.holisticonline.com/stress/stress_diet.htm) (http://www.holisticonline.com/stress/stress_diet.htm)