

Wellness

REVIEW

How Well Do You Handle Stress?

Life=Stress, Stress=Life

Living in this day and age, stress is a normal part of modern life. You will be exposed to some sort of stress every day, whether it's waking up to an alarm, driving the car, paying bills, working, meeting deadlines – all of these can take their toll. Sometimes stress can be so overwhelming, it feels like it is taking over your life. Thankfully, the body has an amazing, protective stress response system to help you cope. The stress response was historically designed to kick in to save your life; nowadays, your stress response is being activated every day rather than just when you come into contact with a hungry sabre tooth tiger! However, this ongoing activation by your nervous system can lead to symptoms of stress and mood disorders that are becoming increasingly common.

Recognising the Signs of Stress

Depending on the type of stress and how long you have been experiencing it, you may be familiar with some of these signs and symptoms that can occur in acute (short-term) stress or with ongoing stress.

Signs of acute stress

- Muscle tension
- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Energy fluctuations
- Alertness
- Sleep disturbances

Signs of ongoing stress

- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Worrying
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Poor concentration
- Weight loss or gain

Getting the Right Tools

When you are under stress, your overworked stress response system requires even more nutrients than usual. This is because your body needs vitamins and minerals to produce the hormones and neurotransmitters (the brain's messengers) required to adapt to the stress and bring the body back into balance.

- **B group vitamins:** B vitamins are needed for healthy mood, motivation and wellbeing. They are vital for producing energy, as well as the neurotransmitters that promote happiness, relaxation and sleep.
- **Magnesium:** When you are stressed, your body may require more magnesium than normal. Magnesium can be beneficial for many things including managing stress and improving energy. You may also know that magnesium is used as a muscle relaxant. Due to its relaxing qualities, it may improve mood and sleep. Ask your

Practitioner about magnesium bisglycinate; it's a superior form of magnesium that is both well absorbed and well tolerated, minimising the risk of potential gastrointestinal effects.

- **Taurine and glutamine:** These amino acids are required as building blocks for your neurotransmitters. They can also help to calm the nervous system, as well as protect against the damage that stress can cause.



Setting Up the Foundations

Now that you know which nutrients can be great for use in times of stress, eating a nutritious diet can help you to maintain the health of your nerves long-term. What happens to your diet when you're stressed? Do you eat a lot, or do you make poor food choices when short on time or patience?

- During times of stress, sugars and refined carbohydrates are a no no! While they provide quick energy, they do not fuel your body with nutrients it needs to cope with stress, and can ultimately lead to weight gain.
- Protein from fish, lean meats, eggs, legumes and nuts can provide you with amino acids to fuel your brain whilst sustaining you for longer, minimising those stress cravings.
- Fish, in particular, contains both protein and essential fats, otherwise known as omega-3 fatty acids which can support a healthy stress response and healthy mood.

Be Strong Against Stress!

Talk to your Practitioner today about how you can best manage the stress that life throws your way. With guidance from your Practitioner and these simple tips, you can stand up to stress – strengthening your mind and your body to become more resilient to the effects of everyday stress.

Talk to your Practitioner about managing stress today.