

STRESS FIGHTING FOODS

Blueberries: Blueberries contain antioxidants and are high in vitamin C, giving the body added reserves to deal with stress. Blueberries also contain a beneficially high amount of fiber to help regulate blood sugar levels, which may increase with high stress.

Brown rice and Quinoa: Quinoa and brown rice contain plentiful amounts of B vitamins and healthy levels of fiber. They also contain serotonin-producing carbohydrates that help maintain healthy blood sugar levels and reduce the chance of spiking.

Dark Chocolate: Dark chocolate (over 70% cacao) has been found to reduce cortisol, a stress hormone and also contains serotonin, which improves moods (especially 85% dark).

Dried apricots: These fruits are rich in magnesium, a stress-buster. Studies report that magnesium may help reduce stress-related heart palpitations. Magnesium is a natural muscle relaxant and promotes sleep, as well. Apricots are high in fiber and vitamin C. A word of caution, however, because dried apricots are high in fructose, consume them in moderate amounts.

Leafy green vegetables: Broccoli, kale, and other dark green vegetables are powerhouses of vitamins that replenish our bodies in times of stress. Many of these green vegetables contain potassium, which is good for our nerves and can have a calming effect.

Oranges: Stress triggers the release of higher than normal levels of free radicals. Oranges are very rich in vitamin C, which keeps free radicals in check and helps our bodies repair themselves. Oranges protect the body from the cumulative effects of stress.

Sweet potatoes: Sweet potatoes contain large amounts of beta-carotene and other vitamins. Sweet potatoes have the additional benefit of satisfying any stress-induced craving for sweets and carbohydrates caused by cortisol. In addition, their fiber causes the body to process carbohydrates in a slower and steady manner, helping to stabilize blood sugar levels.

Turkey: Turkey contains the amino acid L-Tryptophan, which triggers the release of serotonin, a "feel-good" brain chemical. L-Tryptophan has a well-documented calming effect, contributing to the relaxed feeling experienced after eating a turkey dinner. (Chicken is also high in this amino acid.)

Water : Although water is not technically a food, it is a critical source of hydration in times of high stress, which dehydrates the body at increased rates. Even a mild state of dehydration has a negative effect on your mental abilities. Staying well hydrated promotes improves your ability to deal with stress.

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