

In Good Health

Your Monthly Wellness Spotlight by PSA

FOOD MATTERS! EAT THESE SUPERFOODS TO HELP REDUCE STRESS

Stressors are a part of our everyday lives. When we experience changes or challenges that come from stress, our bodies produce both mental and physical responses. Some of physical and mental responses include:

Physical Symptoms:

- Aches/pains
- Chest Pain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Increased Blood Pressure
- Muscle tension
- Stomach Pain/Digestive Problems
- Decreased Immune System

Mental Symptoms:

- Anxiety/Depression
- Irritability
- Panic Attacks
- Profoundly lasting sadness

What Can I Eat to Help Reduce Stress?

Eating carbohydrates can help the brain produce serotonin. The more serotonin your body produces, the better you will feel! Certain complex carbohydrates, including whole grain breads and oatmeal, will take longer to digest, but will maximize your serotonin production. Be sure to incorporate these foods into your diet to help you manage your blood sugar. Some other foods you should consume to reduce stress are:

- **Oranges** – Oranges are loaded with vitamin C, which can help decrease levels of stress hormones and increase your immune system.
- **Spinach** – Spinach is rich in Magnesium, which can help with brain health and to manage stress.
- **Fatty Fish** – Fatty Fish, like salmon and tuna, is a great source of Omega-3 fatty acids. It can help prevent spikes in stress hormones as well as protect against heart disease, depression, and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

- **Black Tea** – Drinking a cup of black tea can help you reduce stress and anxiety levels due to the L-Theanine found in it.
- **Nuts** – Nuts, such as pistachios and almonds, are a great source of healthy fats that can help lower your stress levels.
- **Bananas and Avocados** – Both bananas and avocados are loaded in potassium. If you have an imbalance of potassium, it can cause you anxiety.
- **Bedtime Snack** – Eating healthy carbohydrates is a great bedtime snack. A handful of blueberries is an excellent choice.
- **Warm Milk** – The calcium in a glass of warm milk can help ease anxiety. Try skim or low-fat milk to reduce your caloric intake.
- **Dark Chocolate** – By eating a small dark chocolate bar, you can reduce the stress hormone cortisol as well as those “fight or flight” hormones known as catecholamines.

What Foods Should I Avoid?

When under stress, it is a good idea to avoid the following as much as possible:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Sugary drinks
- Processed foods
- Fried Foods
- Red Meat

If you are struggling to manage the stress and anxiety in your life, talk to your doctor. Your mental health matters. Your doctor can help you manage your stress and offer suggestions for a healthy diet/lifestyle change.

If you have further questions regarding any health matters, feel free to contact Danielle Herndon, RN, CMM – VP, Health Risk Management, at dherndon@psafinancial.com.