

Foods That Fight Stress and Anxiety

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HELP! I am sooo stressed!!!

○ What are your causes of stress?

- Academic troubles?
 - Midterms, Finals, Papers?
- Social stress?
- Economic or Money?
- Living problems?
- Body image?
 - Freshman 15?



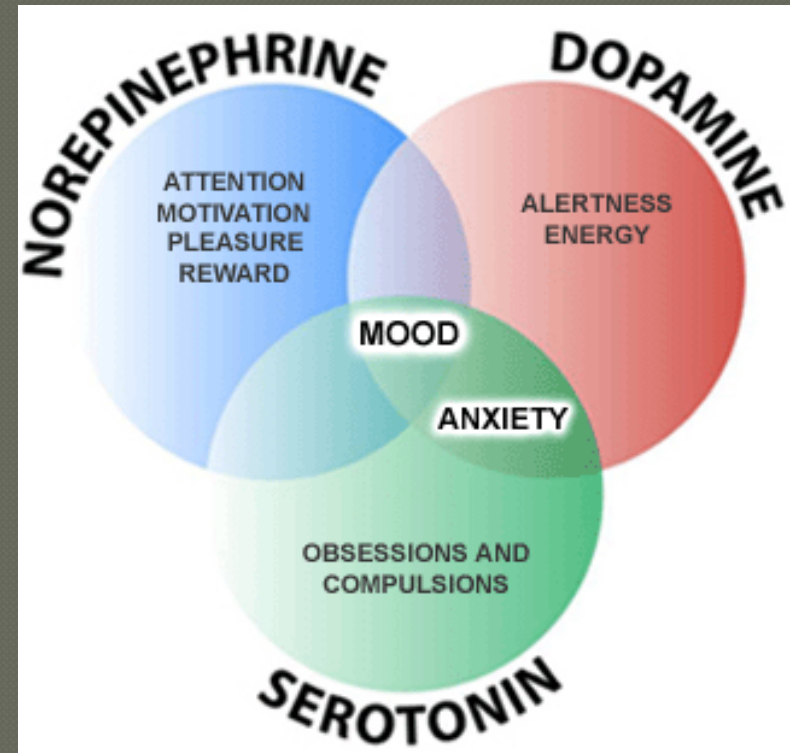
Eating when Stressed

- Stressors make you eat things that are less desirable:
 - Cortisol (stress hormone) → SALT cravings
 - Social eating → eat more than you are aware
 - Nervous eating → munch on chips or drink soda to give your mouth “something to do”
 - Childhood habits → People eat to celebrate, feel better, and deal with stress
 - Stuffing emotions → take the focus off of anger, resentment, fear and anxiety.



Hormones

- Certain foods have been found to stimulate the release of anti-stress hormones:
- **Serotonin** → calming; fight anxiety
- **Dopamine** → pleasure-inducing



Serotonin

- Your brain releases serotonin when you eat carbohydrates.
- Without carbs, your brain cannot produce serotonin.
- You want carbs that are rich in fiber so that your body will absorb them slowly, keeping serotonin flowing steadily.

Recommended:

- Oatmeal
- Whole-wheat bread
- Whole-wheat pasta
- Whole-grain cereals
- Whole-grain granola bars

Not Recommended:

- Cookies
- White bread
- White pasta
- Flour tortillas

Serotonin

- **Monounsaturated fat** and **Omega 3's** help keep receptors in the brain sensitive to serotonin as well as help lower blood pressure.

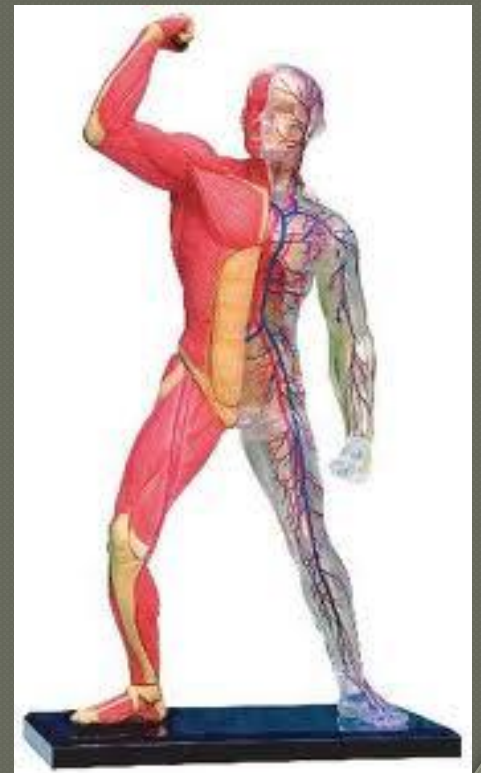
- **Foods:**

- Salmon
- Avocado
- Walnuts
- Almonds



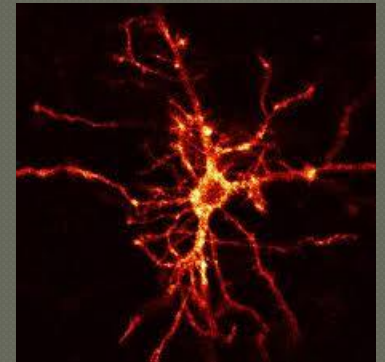
Dopamine

- Dopamine is believed to release chemicals that allow us to feel pleasure (e.g. endorphins).
- Deficiency results in decreased ability to express emotions
- Dopamine plays a critical role in:
 - Control of movement
 - Heart
 - Circulation
 - Rate of metabolism
 - Brain activity



Dopamine

- ◉ Foods that stimulate the release of Dopamine:
 - **Meats:** Fish, eggs, chicken, turkey and red meat
 - **Fruit:** Bananas, prunes, strawberries and apples
 - **Vegetables:** Artichokes and avocados
 - **Nuts/Seeds:** Almonds, pumpkin and sesame seeds
 - **Other:** Legumes and soy



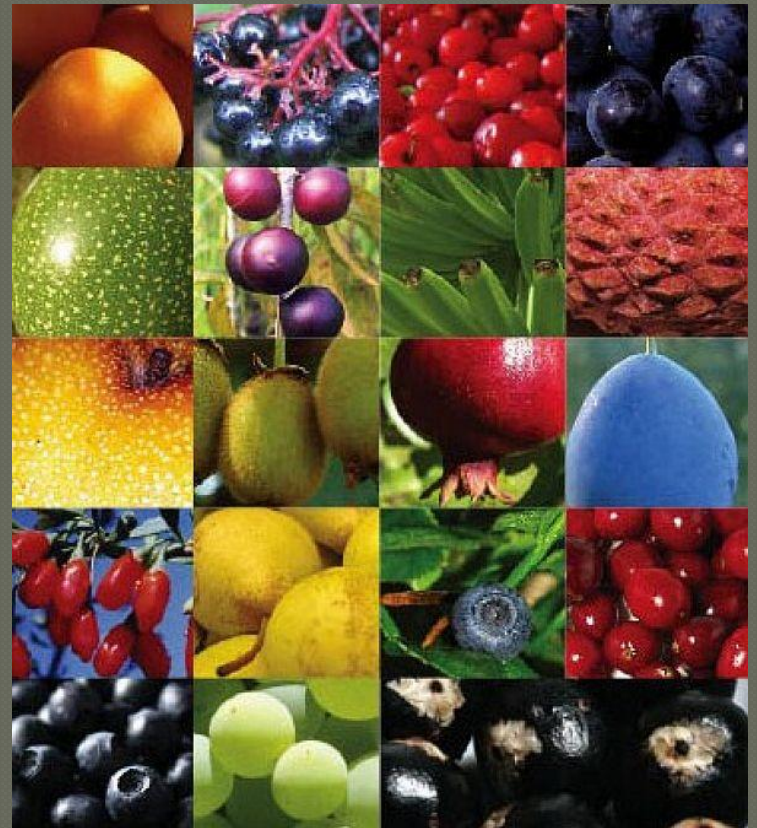
B Vitamins

- Needed to make serotonin
- Enhance immune and nervous system function
- Best food sources include **fresh meats, dairy products, green leafy vegetables, and enriched breads and cereals.**
- The most important B vitamins for stress include:
 - B6
 - B12
 - Folic Acid
 - Riboflavin



Antioxidants

- Help fight free radicals in our body
- Free radicals cause stress to our bodies
- Includes:
 - Vitamin C
 - Vitamin E
 - Selenium
 - Polyphenols



Antioxidants

Antioxidant	Food Sources
Vitamin C	fruits and veggies with the best sources including: red peppers, brussels sprouts, grapefruits, sweet potato, orange juice, broccoli, and strawberries
Vitamin E	mayonnaise, canola oil, sunflower seeds, and wheat germ
Selenium	Fish, shellfish, red meat, grains, eggs, chicken, liver, and garlic
Polyphenols	fruits and plant-derived beverages such as fruit juices, tea, coffee, and red wine

Minerals - Magnesium

- Critical to cell function.
 - Used by over 300 enzymes
 - Needed in energy-yielding reactions
 - Critical for muscle relaxation!
- The most important mineral for stress-reduction!
 - When the body is stressed → released from cells and lost through the urine!
- Most people do not consume the recommended amount of 400 mg (males) and 310 mg (females).
- Food sources of magnesium:
spinach, beans, nuts, soy milk, bran cereal, oysters, and yogurt.



Minerals - Zinc

- May play a role in both behavior & learning
 - May affect cognitive function
- Assists in immune function and cell signaling
- Possible antioxidant properties???
- A study published this year found that subjects with anxiety had low plasma Zn levels!
- Food sources of Zinc: **oysters, beef, yogurt, shrimp, enriched cereals, and pork chops**



Bad Mood Food

- Doughnuts, cookies, and other high-sugar treats.
 - They cause a quick rush, then a crash. These sweets lack the fiber and other nutrients to slow digestion. Choose foods that contain fiber and take longer to break down.
- Bacon, fries, fried foods, fast food
 - Foods high in saturated fats are digested very slowly, diverting blood from your brain to your stomach, which can put you in a fog. They can also raise bad cholesterol levels. Whenever possible, stick to heart-healthy unsaturated fats such as nuts and olive, canola and nut oils.

Bad Mood Food

- **BIG portions**

- Lunches of 1,000+ calories bring on that afternoon malaise because their long digestion time means less blood for your brain and muscles. For sustained energy, graze five to six times a day, (three main meals of no more than 400-600 calories each, plus 200-300 calorie snacks).

- **Excess caffeine and alcohol**

- A drink or two of each may have health benefits, but don't go over your limit: Too much caffeine can make you nauseous. Too much booze can put you at greater risk for cancers, high blood pressure, stroke, and heart failure- and, more immediately, mess with your sleep cycle leaving you tired and blue.

Take Home Message!

- **Good foods:**

- Fruits and veggies
- Whole grains
- Beans and nuts
- Enriched cereals
- Dairy products
- Meats and fish (not fried)



Take Home Message!

● Bad foods:

- High fat foods
- Foods with a lot of sugar
- A lot of caffeine or alcohol
- Large portions

