



Conquer Your STRESS

Stressed...Get A Grip!

First, let's understand STRESS: Having a right definition for stress is helpful in understanding it and coping with it. Stress can be defined as physical, mental or chemical factors that cause a disruption in our equilibrium, or balance. In short, stress occurs when we are physically or emotionally out of balance! Chronic stress—and accompanying high cortisol and adrenalin levels—have been linked to every disease state. Some health experts are so convinced of the role of stress in disease, they have gone so far as to label stress the root of *all* disease!

Stress is multifaceted, coming at us from all directions: our environment, diet, relationships, life events; we even bring it upon ourselves.

Stress takes a nutritional/physiological toll

Since we can't avoid stress we have to learn to live with it and control it. Our attitude towards stress will have a lot to do with how well we cope with it, but it's going to take more than a positive attitude; it's going to take proper nutrition and lifestyle habits. Nutrition is integrally linked to stress for several reasons:

- 1) A nutrient deficiency is itself stressful to the body.
- 2) How the body handles stress is directly related to nutritional status. A well-nourished person is better able to cope with stress than a poorly nourished person.
- 3) Optimal nutritional status is important to prevent stress-induced loss of nutrients. Urinary loss of several vitamins and minerals increases on high-stress days, and blood levels of nutrients are lower during times of stress.
- 4) Vitamin and mineral intake affects the status of the immune system, the body's defense against infection and disease. When the body is under stress several hormones are released that suppress the immune response. Several nutrients, including vitamin A, the B vitamins, vitamin C, and the trace minerals, stimulate the formation and activity of antibodies and lymphocytes. If intake of these nutrients is optimal prior to and during stressful events, body stores are less likely to be depleted and the immune system is less likely to be impaired.

Stress hormones out of balance in today's lifestyles

The adrenal glands produce the hormones cortisol and adrenalin which are referred to as the "stress hormones" due to their important role in our natural and normal stress responses.

The precise amount of cortisol present in the blood varies throughout the day with the highest level in the morning and the lowest level around midnight (or 3-5 hours after the onset of sleep). The rise and fall of cortisol and adrenalin levels is related to the circadian rhythm of light and dark and levels of serotonin and melatonin.

As you can see, we humans need these stress hormones; they provide that "kick in the butt" that gets us out of bed in the morning. But with today's overly-stressed lifestyle, poor diet, caffeine, constant tv, computers, video games, media barrage of negative news, stressful jobs, and even the electric light bulb to keep us working into the night, many today are experiencing symptoms of too much stress hormone, or in other words, chronic stress. And chronic stress is not normal nor is it harmless to your health.

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Traditional herbal solutions to stress: Nervines and Adaptogens

In traditional herbology, through the centuries herbalists have relied on two categories of herbs to combat stress: nervines and adaptogens.

Herbs under the nervine category tend to affect the nervous system either as an overall tonic, a relaxant, or in some cases even as a stimulant.

Adaptogens help the body adapt or cope to stressful situations. They support the body's physiological resistance to stress by supporting metabolic processes with the aim of maintaining balance within the system. In other words, an adaptogen herb will protect and support the adrenal glands and other tissues to function normally during times of stress. On a broader level, adaptogens increase the body's resistance to physical, biological, emotional and environmental stressors, and promote normal function and balance of body systems.

Stress needs an action plan

In today's modern herbalism various combinations of herbs and nutrients have been combined with the best of knowledge to help the body cope with an ever-increasing stressful environment, both physical and emotional. Today, the question isn't are you stressed? Of course you are. Rather, the question is what are you going to do to protect yourself? See the next page for a mini guide to help you choose the right supplement(s) to conquer your stress.

Do the Chronic Stress Test

"Ever wonder what happens when your body becomes overwhelmed by stress? Adrenal fatigue, also known as *hypoadrenia*," writes Carmen Mattes, master herbalist who deals with chronic stress. "Over a prolonged period, chronic nutritional deficiencies can occur, which in turn create stress in the body, causing the cycle to worsen. The sudden release of adrenaline also increases the metabolism of fats, proteins, and carbohydrates which causes the body to excrete amino acids (protein building blocks) and minerals such as magnesium, phosphorus and calcium. The body then has an impaired ability to digest any nutrients, thereby becoming nutritionally starved." Adrenal exhaustion has multiple symptoms; do the test to see if you're experiencing *hypoadrenia*:

Common Symptoms of *hypoadrenai* (Chronic STRESS)

- Fatigue (no matter how much sleep you may have had)
- Hormonal imbalances such as PMS and menopausal syndrome
- Insomnia
- Muscle weakness
- Trembling
- Weight gain (particularly around the waistline)
- Difficulty losing weight despite genuine attempts
- Difficulty remembering (memory problems)
- Lack of sex drive
- Poor recovery after exercising
- Hair loss
- Depression
- Anxiety



"The broad spectrum of symptoms and their slow, cumulative effects, which are not initially obvious, can easily result in misdiagnosis of adrenal fatigue. A person might say they haven't felt the same since a certain event took place, or it might be a series of stressful situations that have all contributed to physical decline," writes Mattes.

Source: Carmen Mattes, master herbalist, *Putting the Brakes on Adrenal Fatigue*, Vista Magazine, June 2010

Mini-Guide to Stress Support



Adrenal Support

BEST USE — Support for the function of the adrenal glands is crucial during times of stress. Contains a combination of well documented adaptogen herbs rhodiola, holy basil and schizandra to strengthen and protect the adrenal glands. Also contains targeted supporting nutrients.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Helps to temporarily relieve symptoms of stress such as mental fatigue and sensation of weakness.
- Contains adaptogenic herbs in combination with supporting vitamins and minerals.



Stress Formula

BEST USE — Nutritional support of the nervous system during times of stress. B-complex and vitamin C combined with nervine herbs hops, passion flower and valerian, and the adaptogen herb schizandra.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Vitamin B complex and vitamin C supplement.
- Nervine and adaptogen herbs.
- Provides nutrients needed by the nervous system and the adrenal glands.



Stress Pack

BEST USE — Stress Pack is a multi-supplement formula to provide nutritional support during times of acute or chronic stress. The formula contains an array of targeted vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and extracts, plus adaptogen herbs.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Multi vitamin/mineral supplement which is a factor in good health and is a source of antioxidants.
- Helps support cognitive function and/or reduce mental fatigue and enhance physical capacity/performance.
- Contents used in traditional herbal medicine to ease nervous tension.



ZERENITY

BEST USE — Contains the patented botanical ingredient Zembrin®, or *Sceletium tortuosum*, used to support the nervous system and produce feelings of calm and relaxation. Use during times of acute stress when you know you'll need extra calming support.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Contains the patented Zembrin® botanical ingredient.
- Helps quickly ease nervousness and promotes feelings of relaxation and calm.
- Non-drowsy, non-habit-forming relief.



STR-J

BEST USE — Relieves restlessness, stressful tension and mental stress. An all-herbal traditional stress formula containing two classic, and best known stress/tranquilizing herbs: chamomile and passion flower with other supporting herbs.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Traditionally used in herbal medicine as a sleep aid in cases of restlessness or insomnia due to mental stress.
- May help relieve excitability, nervous tension and the effects of everyday stresses.