



"For with God nothing shall be impossible."  
Luke 1:37

## Health & Wellness: Stress

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**Stress** is the body's natural response to changes or challenges, often resulting in physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions. While some stress can be beneficial and help motivate us, excessive or chronic stress can lead to health problems. Yes, "**good**" stress, known as eustress, can affect the body similarly to bad stress, but it typically has a positive impact, motivating and energizing you. However, if good stress becomes overwhelming or chronic, it can lead to negative health effects just like bad stress.



(Click on picture to watch YouTube video by Barbara O'Neill.)

### How Stress Leads to Illness

Stress can significantly impact both physical and mental health. Understanding how stress affects the body is crucial for managing its effects.

#### Physical Effects of Stress

- **Hormonal Changes:** Stress triggers the release of hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. While these hormones prepare the body for immediate action, prolonged exposure can lead to health issues.
- **Weakened Immune System:** Chronic stress can weaken the immune system, making the body more susceptible to infections and illnesses.
- **Cardiovascular Problems:** Long-term stress is linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, and increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.
- **Digestive Issues:** Stress can cause stomach problems, including ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and other digestive disorders.

#### Psychological Effects of Stress

- **Mental Health Disorders:** Chronic stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. It can also exacerbate existing mental health conditions.
- **Cognitive Impairment:** Stress affects memory and concentration, making it difficult to focus and process information.

#### Behavioral Changes

- **Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms:** People under stress may turn to unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, overeating, or substance abuse, which can further harm health.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Stress often leads to sleep problems, including insomnia, which can compound other health issues.

Understanding the connection between stress and illness highlights the importance of stress management techniques. Regular physical activity, relaxation practices, and seeking support can help mitigate the negative effects of stress on health. Anxiety is often rooted in a hypersensitive threat-response mechanism deep within your limbic system. In a state of chronic alarm, your brain misclassifies safe experiences as threats—triggering cycles of anxiety, exhaustion, and autonomic imbalance.

#### What can help?

### **Prayer and Fasting:**

- Emotional and Psychological Benefits:
  - Increased Clarity - Many report improved mental clarity and focus during and after fasting,
  - Enhanced Mood - Fasting can lead to a sense of accomplishment and improved emotional well-being,
  - Self-Control - The discipline of fasting strengthens your ability to manage impulses and desires.
- Physical Benefits
  - Health Improvements - Fasting can promote autophagy, reduce inflammation, and support cellular repair processes.
  - Weight Management - Intermittent fasting may assist in weight loss and metabolic health, although results can vary.

### **Start your day with:**

- *On an empty stomach in a shot glass mix the following*
  - squeeze a key lime
  - 1/16 tsp cayenne
  - 1-2 Tbsp MCT Coconut Oil
  - a pinch or two of GOOD mineral salt
  - DRINK UP!!

### **Castor Oil:**

- Castor oil may help reduce stress by promoting relaxation and improving sleep quality through its anti-inflammatory properties and effects on the lymphatic system. Using castor oil packs can be a supportive tool for managing stress.

### **DNRS - Dynamic Neural Retraining Sysytem helps by:**

- Rewiring neural pathways through guided visualization, mindfulness, and mental exercises. Breaking the threat-response cycle, enabling your nervous system to recognize safety. Cultivating calm and resilience, through consistency and slowly restoring emotional regulation. With practice, many notice reduced worry, improved sleep, mental clarity, and a return of enjoyment in life.

## **Kathy's Korner**

### **Cayenne**

*Capsicum annuum*



The past few days it has been EXTREMELY COLD in NC!!! (-1 Sunday night) I have struggled to stay warm and to keep the chicken's water from freezing.

**So, are there any herbs that will help you stay warm?**

Yes! Herbs such as cayenne and ginger help to warm the body and increase circulation. This month

### **Happy New Year!**

Each year my husband, Chris, and I travel to Florida for Christmas. I know it's not a white Christmas, but warm temps, shorts and flip flops are what I grew up with. However, it's not quite the same without my daddy who passed away in 2015.

I know for some people Christmas is a mix of joy and sadness. For some more sadness than joy. I pray that the days that led up to Christmas that you knew that Immanuel, God was with you. Know that he loves you and gave His only Son, **Jesus**, as a sacrifice for you.

Blessings and peace upon you and your family in the new year!

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; . . . he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

### **Uses and benefits**

- cold and flu care
- weight loss
- parasites
- digestion
- diabetes
- circulation
- pain & inflammation

we are focusing on **cayenne** which has many health benefits.

Cayenne peppers contain a compound, capsaicin, *that relieves pain by inhibiting the release of substance P, a neurotransmitter responsible for communicating pain sensations. Capsaicin can be absorbed through the skin.* (Source: Phyllis A. Balch)

You can season your food with cayenne, create **salves for joint pain**, neuropathy or shingles, and even make a spiced hot chocolate drink to share at Christmas and/or in the New Year!

Peppers are easy to **grow** and love the heat of summer. I grow them to use for myself and feed to my chickens during the winter. Yes, cayenne helps keep my chickens warm, too.

More warming herb **recipes**.

### Ways to prepare

- tincture
- capsules
- compress
- infused oil, salve
- tea
- gargle



## Spiced Hot Chocolate Mix

### Ingredients

2 cups Organic Sugar (adjust to taste)  
2 cups raw, organic cacao powder  
1/2 tablespoon Sea Salt  
2 teaspoons Cinnamon  
1 teaspoon Cayenne (adjust to taste)  
1/2 to 1 teaspoon Ginger powder

Optional spices: ground anise, ground clove, ground turmeric, etc.

### Method

Mix everything together and make sure there are no clumps.

Store your mix in an airtight container, like a Mason jar. You can even put this mix into smaller 8 ounce jelly jars for wonderful, thoughtful gifts your friends and family will just love!!

For one 8-ounce cup of milk, use 2 tablespoons of the cocoa mix—give or take to taste.

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