



## STRESS

Stress can exhaust natural defenses and activate stress hormones which may deplete nutrient and energy reserves. Certain nutrients can help the body to cope and restore equilibrium. **Complex carbohydrates** should be the centerpiece of each meal to help the body deal with stress. The nervous and immune systems require plenty of B vitamins so they can counteract fatigue brought on by stress. The B vitamins include **niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, pantothenic acid, biotin, vitamin B6, folic acid, and vitamin B12**. In addition to the food sources listed below for individual B vitamins, brewer's yeast, breakfast cereals, and some instant breakfast mixes are good sources of several B vitamins. Foods rich in **vitamin C, zinc, and selenium** are useful for supporting the immune system. Since cold sores are often linked to stress, **lysine**-rich foods may be beneficial because of their role in preventing and managing cold sores. Foods containing **calcium and magnesium** are valuable too, because of their soothing effects on muscles. Consuming foods high in **tryptophan and tyrosine** are worthwhile because they help bolster the nervous system. When stress induces diarrhea, foods high in **soluble fiber** may be useful, while **insoluble fiber**-rich foods are beneficial for managing constipation, which may also be brought on by stress. Some popular "comfort foods" during stress include mashed potatoes, warm milk, and pasta. Mashed potatoes and pasta are complex carbohydrates, while milk is high in calcium.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD EAT & WHY:

#### **biotin**

Biotin assists the body in metabolizing protein, fats, and carbohydrates from food. It is important during times of stress because it plays a special role in helping the body to use glucose and promotes overall equilibrium along with the other B vitamins.

*Leading Food Sources of biotin:* [Cauliflower](#), [Eggs](#), [Peanuts](#), [Cheese](#), [fresh](#)

#### **calcium**

Calcium is needed for normal communication among nerve cells and for muscle contraction, all vital during the body's battle against stress. Some research indicates that dietary calcium may help lower blood pressure, which can be raised during times of stress.

*Leading Food Sources of calcium:* [Broccoli](#), [Amaranth](#), [Bok choy](#), [Milk](#), [Kale](#), [Beans, dried](#), [Cheese, fresh](#), [Tofu](#), [Soybeans](#), [Salmon](#), [Yogurt](#)

#### **complex carbohydrates**

Complex carbohydrates are an excellent energy source for the body during times of stress. Research indicates that complex carbohydrates may soothe the stress response by replenishing levels of the brain chemical serotonin.

*Leading Food Sources of complex carbohydrates:* [Broccoli](#), [Potatoes](#), [Squash, winter](#), [Rice, brown](#), [Blackberries](#), [Pasta](#), [wheat](#)



### **fiber, insoluble**

Constipation sometimes occurs during stress, so consuming insoluble fiber is beneficial because it bulks up stools and eases elimination.

*Leading Food Sources of fiber, insoluble:* [Figs](#), [Peas, fresh](#), [Beans, dried](#), [Raisins & Currants](#), [Wheat](#), [Prunes](#), [Rice, brown](#)

### **fiber, soluble**

When stress is associated with diarrhea, soluble fiber is useful because it helps absorb excess water and lessen diarrhea.

*Leading Food Sources of fiber, soluble:* [Carrots](#), [Beans, dried](#), [Oats](#), [Apples](#), [Barley](#), [Peas, fresh](#)

### **folic acid**

Folic acid is an important member of the B vitamin family and is required along with the others when the body is coping with stress. Research suggests that folic acid may help depression, which is often associated with stress.

*Leading Food Sources of folic acid:* [Asparagus](#), [Beets](#), [Spinach](#), [Brussels sprouts](#), [Avocados](#), [Broccoli](#), [Beans, dried](#), [Chick-peas](#), [Soybeans](#), [Lentils](#), [Oranges](#), [Peas, fresh](#), [Turkey](#), [Cabbage](#), [Savoy](#), [Bok choy](#)

### **lysine**

Lysine may be useful in managing and preventing cold sores, which are often early signs of stress. Studies suggest that lysine has antiviral properties because of its interference in the replication of the virus responsible for cold sores, herpes simplex virus (HSV).

*Leading Food Sources of lysine:* [Chicken](#), [Turkey](#), [Potatoes](#), [Cheese, fresh](#), [Soy products](#), [Soybeans](#), [Eggs](#), [Milk](#), [Fish, lean](#), [Beef](#)

### **magnesium**

Magnesium is beneficial during stress because it helps muscles to relax.

*Leading Food Sources of magnesium:* [Spinach](#), [Sunflower seeds](#), [Chocolate](#), [Pumpkin seeds](#), [Oysters](#), [Brazil nuts](#), [Quinoa](#), [Avocados](#), [Buckwheat](#), [Amaranth](#), [Almonds](#), [Barley](#)

### **niacin**

As a member of the B vitamin family, niacin is required along with the other B vitamins when the body is coping with stress. A diet rich in niacin is valuable during stress because niacin helps the body to release energy from carbohydrates. It also plays a role in controlling blood sugar and maintaining proper nervous system function.

*Leading Food Sources of niacin:* [Rice, brown](#), [Pomegranates](#), [Tuna](#), [Lamb](#), [Wheat](#), [Turkey](#), [Chicken](#)

### **pantothenic acid**

The body relies on pantothenic acid (also known as vitamin B5) to help produce stress hormones during times of psychological difficulty (emotional upset, depression, anxiety) as well as other types of strain, including migraines, chronic fatigue, and quitting smoking. It is commonly taken as part of a vitamin B complex supplement for this purpose.

*Leading Food Sources of pantothenic acid:* [Avocados](#), [Mushrooms](#), [Yogurt](#), [Salmon](#), [Sunflower seeds](#)



### **riboflavin (vitamin B<sub>2</sub>)**

Riboflavin is beneficial during stress because it converts other B vitamins to useful forms so that they can do their work. In addition, riboflavin helps bolster the immune system which can be run down during times of stress. Riboflavin aids in the production of infection-fighting immune cells.  
*Leading Food Sources of riboflavin (vitamin B<sub>2</sub>):* [Avocados](#), [Duck](#), [Pork, fresh](#), [Clams](#), [Milk](#), [Yogurt](#), [Lamb](#), [Mushrooms](#)

### **thiamin (vitamin B<sub>1</sub>)**

Thiamin is an important member of the B vitamin family and is required along with the others when the body is coping with stress. Thiamin is beneficial during the body's battle against stress because it is essential for converting carbohydrates in foods into energy, while also promoting healthy nerves.  
*Leading Food Sources of thiamin (vitamin B<sub>1</sub>):* [Asparagus](#), [Tuna](#), [Brazil nuts](#), [Salmon](#), [Pork, fresh](#), [Pasta, wheat](#), [Avocados](#), [Soy milk](#), [Oats](#), [Mussels](#), [Sunflower seeds](#), [Wheat](#), [Rice, white](#), [Barley](#)

### **vitamin B<sub>12</sub>**

Vitamin B12 helps the body to cope with stress because it works in concert with other B vitamins. B12 assists the body in converting food to energy, while also supporting the nervous system.  
*Leading Food Sources of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>:* [Beef](#), [Oysters](#), [Trout](#), [Crab](#), [Clams](#), [Tuna](#), [Yogurt](#), [Lamb](#)

### **vitamin B<sub>6</sub>**

Vitamin B6 helps the body to manufacture brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) essential for the body to cope with stress, such as serotonin. Vitamin B6 may also help boost the immune system during times of stress.  
*Leading Food Sources of vitamin B<sub>6</sub>:* [Sweet potatoes](#), [Avocados](#), [Sunflower seeds](#), [Tuna](#), [Chick-peas](#), [Salmon](#), [Pork, fresh](#), [Potatoes](#), [Turkey](#), [Chicken](#), [Bok choy](#), [Rice, brown](#), [Barley](#), [Mangoes](#), [Bananas](#)

### **vitamin C**

As an immune-boosting antioxidant, vitamin C supports the immune system during stress. In addition, some research suggests that vitamin C may lessen symptoms and shorten the duration of colds, which may be brought on by stress.

*Leading Food Sources of vitamin C:* [Cabbage, red](#), [Potatoes](#), [Strawberries](#), [Tangerines & other mandarins](#), [Peppers, bell, red](#), [Kiwi fruit](#), [Oranges](#)

### **zinc**

Zinc is useful in the management of stress because it help support the immune system.  
*Leading Food Sources of zinc:* [Barley](#), [Turkey](#), [Wheat](#), [Lamb](#), [Crab](#), [Oysters](#), [Beef](#), [Chicken](#)

**Mega-Recipes** (where over 25% of the recipe contains one of the above) can be found at [www.wholehealthmd.com](http://www.wholehealthmd.com).