

Foods that Shutdown STRESS

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Polio survivor Jann Hartman, who has a degree in Home Economics and Nutrition, has written and lectured on nutrition for the past 20 years. She has been living with post-polio syndrome since 1989.

Jann is the mother of three boys, all presently serving in the Navy. She and John, her husband and fellow traveler of 32 years, have two granddaughters.

Did you realize that the foods you eat can help you deal with stress?

First, you need to know that salty foods, sugary foods (candy and desserts), high fat foods, caffeinated coffee, soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages can add to your stress levels. So what should you eat? Here are a few ideas.

Caffeine-Free Beverages: 100% pure juices (a natural source of soothing fruit sugars) and herbal teas will provide necessary trace minerals, such as zinc and selenium.

Idea! Drinking hot or iced herbal tea or juice (like grape, orange, or papaya) can be tranquilizing due to tryptophan, a necessary amino acid.

Raw Vegetables: Eating foods high in fiber can help lower cholesterol, and even lower blood pressure and tension. Vegetables contain nerve-soothing potassium and are naturally low in sodium. Plus, you get vitamins A and D, and folic acid.

Idea! Try adding some dark greens like parsley, watercress, or even dandelion greens to a tossed salad.

Whole Grains and Nuts: Grains are a great source of vitamin E, potassium, and pantothenic acid (an anti-stress B vitamin). These are nutrients often missing from fast foods such as French fries or a sweet roll. Magnesium (nature's tranquilizer) is abundant in nuts. Try them unsalted.

Idea! Look for sugar-free bran muffins, oatmeal, wheat germ cereal, and salt-free nuts and seeds for snacks.

Yogurt: Rich in vitamins A, D, and B-complex, yogurt is a great lowfat source of protein. It is high in calcium, which eases the stress of insomnia and migraine headaches. Yogurt is digested 50% faster than regular milk, so it is very easy on your digestive system.

Idea! Have a breakfast sundae. Alternate layers of plain yogurt and freshly sliced berries. Top with toasted wheat germ.

Sea Vegetables: Kelp, dulse, and spirulina are 12% sodium, but also provide protein, calcium, fiber, and vitamin A.

Idea! Make a super salad packed with vitamins A and C by adding sprouts, greens, and a dash of dulse flakes.

Soybeans: Try bringing home the tofu instead of bringing home the bacon. Soy foods are a great source of calcium, magnesium, B-complex vitamins, protein, and tryptophan.

Idea! Add cubes of tofu to tuna salad. Make a tofu shake or buy "soy nuts" for a tasty protein snack.

Next time you're stressing out, reach for a food or drink that can help your body by shutting down stress! ●

Adapted from "The Foods That Shut Down Stress" by Harold Rosenberg in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (June 29, 1986) and "Power Nutrition for Your Chronic Illness" by Kristine Napier, MPH, RD.

Idea! Take a stress-reducing dish and recipe to your next support group meeting.

STRESS

Stress is a normal part of life. In small quantities, stress is good – it motivates people and can help them be more productive. However, too much stress can actually harm the brain and body. Persistent and unrelenting stress often leads to anxiety.

It's widely believed that most illnesses are related to unrelieved or unmanaged stress. Eating well and relaxation techniques are two things readily accomplished without much time and effort.

If you find that your stress won't go away regardless what you do, beware!

This may be a sign of a hidden illness, such as:

- ◆ Thyroid disease (low or low normal)
- ◆ Calcium imbalance (high or low)
- ◆ Anemia (low iron)
- ◆ Diabetes (too much sugar, not enough insulin)
- ◆ Manic depression (Bi-polar disorder)
- ◆ Liver disease
- ◆ Kidney malfunction
- ◆ Vitamin deficiency
- ◆ Hormone deficiency

If your symptoms and stresses are not getting better, be sure to see your doctor for a complete physical examination, including blood and urine tests.

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Mozo Shoes: Easy on the Sole

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Shoe shopping can be a major headache for polio survivors with different size feet, not to mention that it can be a major expense. Jim Agnew, founder of Mozo Shoes, is willing to give you some relief by eliminating the expense of buying two pair of shoes to get one pair that fits. The shoes offer stylish, all-leather uppers with cushioned soles that can be ordered in any size for any foot. Polio survivors can order separate sizes at no additional cost, or purchase a single shoe.

After an auto accident in 1972, Agnew was unable to walk on one of his feet for many months. In an effort to help solve his orthopedic dilemma, Agnew, an experienced shoemaker, invented his own self-molding silicon footwear. He made and sold his footwear for years, but eventually returned to work for a major company where he created athletic shoes. He became disillusioned and branched out on his own again. He knew that people who work on their feet all day are just as important as athletes; yet no one was addressing their specific needs.

The production of Mozo shoes began in 1998 with the goal of making a shoe that helped the foot to function properly. Agnew states, "When we decided to make Mozo Shoes, our one rule was that all design and materials serve the purpose of supporting the foot, absorbing shock, and helping the foot work properly. If it doesn't do that, we don't have it." His major challenge has been in educating people on how the feet should work properly in shoes.

The shoes are built on a last that is shaped like a human foot providing extra room for toes and metatarsal movement. Each shoe comes with a fully molded leather-lined orthotic that can be modified or replaced easily with a prescription one. The company will also "customize modularize" a product, meaning they can assemble each shoe for the particular needs of the foot. "Fit plates" can be sent to help people create a customized fit.

After making shoes for a polio survivor in Taos, he decided to offer his footwear to people with special size needs. Visit Mozoshoes.com or call 877-834-6696.

Mozo will accommodate people who have limited resources. Please contact *Post-Polio Health* at 314-534-0475 or info@post-polio.org for more details. ●

**From Debbie: "I found a doctor who was interested in post-polio and after many months of treatment, he insisted that what would help me most would be a change in lifestyle, i.e., retirement. I hate to admit it, but I do feel so much better now. I have cut the medication I was taking to one-fourth. All of a sudden, I have tons of free time, and I would like to use the time to give something back and do something that is meaningful to me."*