



Nutri Patient Information Guide # 6

Stress – How To Handle It Naturally

High pressure job, financial constraints, relationship problems, family pressures, house move? Any of these and more can frazzle your nerves and make you vulnerable to illness. Everyone is exposed to one type of stress or another in their lives. A certain degree of stress is in fact necessary, it is only when stress becomes out of hand that it becomes problematic.

Increased Demands

When stress builds up, you become more vulnerable to physical illness, behavioural and emotional problems. Stress puts increased demands on the heart, blood vessels, skin, muscles, digestive system and many other parts of the body.

Adrenal Glands

Stress of any kind - good or bad - causes the adrenal glands to work harder. Their job is to secrete "fight or flight" hormones that regulate many vital body functions. In order that the adrenal glands can work optimally and carry on producing these hormones, a steady supply of nutrients is required.

Good Nutrition

Your diet can substantially influence your tolerance of and response to stress. Good nutrition and nutritional supplementation cannot remove the stresses from peoples lives but it can help to:-

- Increase one's tolerance to stress
- Reduce the adverse effects of stress
- Reduce the chance of, or the effects of adrenal exhaustion

Helping Yourself to Cope with Stress

By making some changes in your lifestyle, improving your diet and incorporating a nutritional supplement programme, your body will be able to cope far more efficiently with the demands placed upon it.

Positive Nutrients in Relation to Stress

Stress affects our adrenal glands. If we are over stressed the adrenal glands become over worked and eventually they become so fatigued that they cannot cope with the demands put upon them. When this occurs, people can become ill and pick up infections. They find difficulty in shaking off an infection and their infections are prolonged. During stress adrenal levels of pantothenic acid, vitamin C and other essential nutrients are used up at an alarming rate. It is particularly important to ensure optimal intake of these nutrients in order that your body can cope more efficiently. Your health care professional will advise you of the best nutrients suited to your individual needs. Some of the following may be considered.

B Vitamins

When under stress your body requires more B vitamins which are involved in protecting the nervous system. As they are not stored in the body they must be taken in sufficient amounts at all times. Pantothenic acid is one B vitamin that is very important for adrenal function and long term deprivation could bring about chronic adrenal problems. Therefore, if you are continuously stressed, supplementation of the B complex vitamins including pantothenic acid is important. Good food sources of the B vitamins are yeast extract, green leafy vegetables and wholegrains.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is vital to help the body cope with stress. Large amounts of vitamin C are found in the adrenal glands and levels are significantly reduced when one is under stress. Vitamin C also helps to boost the immune system which is weakened by the adrenal hormones secreted during stress. Although we can get vitamin C from fresh fruit and vegetables, the amounts are often not enough for optimum health. Therefore a daily supplementation of at least 1000mg of vitamin C per day should be recommended.

Zinc

Zinc is necessary for the production of the adrenal hormones and it is therefore extremely important to ensure optimum levels of zinc are maintained in the body. Zinc is often lacking in today's diets and therefore a zinc supplement could well prove extremely beneficial.

Magnesium and Calcium

Magnesium is involved in the production of the adrenal hormones and therefore helps to reduce the risk of adrenal exhaustion from chronic stress. Magnesium helps relax the nerves. Calcium works with magnesium for nerve function and a balance of the two minerals may therefore be very helpful in maintaining nervous health.

Herbs to Help Stress

Korean, Siberian and Asian Ginseng have all been shown to play an important role in maintaining adrenal function. Cordyceps, Rhodiola, Rehmannia, Dong Quai and Jujube fruit have all been used for centuries to support stress levels, anxiety disorders and restful sleep.

Digestive Enzymes

Stress can play havoc with the digestive system by inhibiting digestive enzymes. This can lead to indigestion, bloating, gas, heartburn, constipation or diarrhoea. Supplementing digestive enzymes prior to, or during a meal, can help to eradicate some of the problematic symptoms.

Further Adrenal Support

Many people find taking supplements specifically designed to help support the adrenal glands very beneficial. Your health care practitioner will be able to recommend specific supplements most suited to your needs.

Foods to Avoid

Caffeine is a stimulant and can cause irritability and lead to over stimulation of the adrenal glands so the body is less able to cope with stress. It can prevent the absorption of some essential nutrients - zinc and iron.

Alcohol - Excessive intake depletes many vitamins and minerals which can impair the detoxification process of the liver and cause adrenal stimulation. However, moderate amounts of alcohol have been shown to have a beneficial effect on cardiovascular disease.

Sugar in excess impairs the function of the adrenal glands and has been linked with suppressing the immune system.

Salt - Certain people are sensitive to salt which may result in high blood pressure. If they are stressed this can have major implications on health. In summary, by improving your nutritional intake through the diet and taking supplements to support the body, you are more likely to see the stresses of life as opportunities and challenges rather than problems and threats.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information guide. If you wish to order any of the supplements mentioned, please contact your healthcare practitioner who can prescribe Nutri products specific to your personal requirements.

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