

# Stress: How it affects the way we Eat!

**Stress** is a part of all our lives everyday but it is how we handle or react to it that determines what outcomes our bodies experience. Generally speaking, there are many negative outcomes that are related to **Stress** that can trigger off ongoing health problems that may include elevated blood pressures, diarrhea, constipation, development of social problems, headaches, and even sexual dysfunctions. Many of these outcomes can be minimized if we just adjust to the stressful situations in a more positive way. Some suggestive practices may include sharing that stress with others to help you deal with it in a better way. Another suggestion is to know your limits with each stressful situation so you know when enough is enough, and to move on with it. A third practice maybe just relaxing before, during, and after the stressful event. This will help you react with a more positive response while dealing with the issue at hand. These are just a few ways to help us deal with the **Stress** that we face everyday.

Nutritionally speaking however, **Stress** can cause specific and even long term health problems that may become a permanent part of our lifestyles. Such problems may include but not limited to are chronic ulcers, heart attacks, frequent colds and infections, anxiety and shortness of breath incidents, and even chronic fatigue syndrome. So, if you are one the millions of people who suffer from acid-related gastrointestinal discomfort, there are things we can do to improve our health and enhance the quality of life. These helpful hints that may prevent or reduce potential digestive disorders begin with these ten recommendations when dealing with anticipated stressful situations:

1. Avoid spicy, acidic, tomato like fruit juices, and Mexican types of foods while under conditions of **Stress** due to your system already producing excess stomach acids.
2. Avoid fast-foods especially fatty foods that require more digestive juices for metabolism and breakdown. Chocolate in any form should also be avoided with those who have ongoing problems with gastric reflux/heartburn.
3. Limit your intake of coffee, tea, alcohol, and carbonated soft drinks. These liquids usually contain ingredients that act as stomach irritants resulting in frequent burning sensations.
4. Watch your weight. Excess weight can increase blood pressure in the stomach area aggravating acid reflux. Avoid being bloated after finishing your meals to minimize your chances of vomiting.
5. Do not gorge yourself at mealtimes. Eating in moderate portions allows you to enjoy the true taste of your food, fills you up faster creating a feeling of satiety, and helps manage your weight better over time.
6. Wait adequate time after eating before exercising. This helps for better digestion to occur, ideal nutrient absorption to take place, and of course reducing your chances of stomach cramps.
7. Avoid bedtime snacks and eat meals at least 3-4 hours before lying down. This practice allows for better mobility of all foods and liquids through your system. Otherwise, your last meal or snack just sits in the pit of your stomach stirring up gastric acids interfering with peaceful sleep and relaxation.
8. Work on reducing or stopping smoking. Smoking, another stomach irritant, does have a adverse effect on the way we eat or how much we eat. Remember, when we are enduring stress, we have a tendency to reach for that quick fix.
9. Unless you have an adjustable bed, attempt to elevate the head of your bed with wooden blocks. This will allow for better breathing, digestion, and concentrated sleep patterns. Elevating your head with extra pillows is not recommended due to the possibility of increasing pressure in the abdominal area resulting to digestive discomfort.
10. Finally, it recommended for you to consult with your physician if you are taking antacids such as Tums, Rolaids, Maalox, or Mylanta more than three times per week since these maybe an indication of persistent health

problems.

It is quite obvious that **Stress** can and does affect our lives in many ways. However, stress eventually has the most crucial impact on our nutritionally well beings. It is not how much stress we as individuals can handle, it is how we handle the secondary repercussions after the fact. It is also these repercussions that can affect our overall health and quality of lives that will determine our longevity. **REMEMBER, IT IS NOT ALWAYS WHEN AND WHAT YOU EAT BUT THE ACTIVITY THAT AFFECTS THE WAY WE EAT THAT CAN ULTIMATELY CHANGE OUR LIVES FOREVER!**