



It's Time to Relax

Week 2: Stress-busting Foods

Food can help to fight stress in several ways. Some foods can reduce levels of **cortisol** and **adrenaline** – stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. A *balanced diet* can counteract the impact of stress by strengthening the **immune system** and lowering **blood pressure**.

Stress Busting Foods



Magnesium

Too little **magnesium** may trigger headaches and fatigue, compounding the effects of stress. One cup of spinach goes a long way toward replenishing magnesium stores. Not a spinach eater? Try cooked soybeans or a salmon filet, also high in magnesium. Green leafy vegetables are a rich source of magnesium.



Vitamin C

Studies suggest that **Vitamin C** can reduce levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. In one study, in people with high blood pressure, blood pressure and cortisol levels (a stress hormone) returned to normal more quickly when people took Vitamin C before a stressful task.



Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish such as salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and protect against heart disease, depression, and premenstrual syndrome. For a steady supply of Omega-3s, aim to eat 3 ounce of fatty fish at least three times per week.



Complex Carbohydrates

Serotonin is the body's calming brain chemical and can be boosted by eating complex carbohydrates. Good choices include whole-grain breakfast cereals, breads, pasta, and oatmeal. Complex carbohydrates are digested slowly and help to stabilize blood sugar.



Hot Tea

Consider going **green**. Coffee raises levels of the notorious stress hormone (cortisol) whereas green tea contains high levels of antioxidants and theanine (amino acid). Theanine helps to relieve stress and promote relaxation. **Chamomile tea** is also a traditional favorite for calming the mind.

Drink Up!

Orange Booster Flax Smoothie



Ingredients

- 2 cups frozen peach slices
- 1 cup carrot juice
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh ginger

Directions

1. Combine peaches, carrot juice, orange juice, flaxseed and ginger in blender; blend until smooth. Serve immediately

Note: Makes 2 servings (1 ½ cup each)

Tip: Look for ground flaxseeds (or flax meal) in the natural-foods section of large supermarkets or in natural-food stores. Store in the refrigerator or freezer.

Nutritional Information (per serving)			
Calories	209	Monounsaturated Fat	1 g
Protein	5 g	Cholesterol	0 mg
Carbohydrates	41 g	Sodium	38 mg
Total Fat	4 g	Fiber	6 g
Saturated Fat	0 g		

Nutrition Bonus: Vitamin A (467% daily value); Vitamin C (137% daily value); Potassium (28% daily value); Magnesium (20% daily value)

Resource: www.eatingwell.com