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March 28, 2011

# WELLNESS WEEKLY

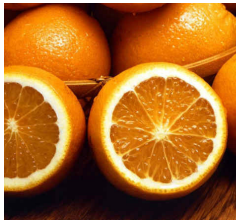
## FIGHT STRESS

*by eating these foods...*

Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness. There's evidence that too much pressure is not just a mood killer, people who are under constant stress are more vulnerable to everything from colds to high blood pressure and heart disease. Although there are many ways to cope, one strategy is to eat stress-fighting foods.



Foods can fight stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, actually boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can reduce levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. Finally, a nutritious diet can counteract the impact of stress, by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure. Listed below are other foods which can help ward off stress:



### Oranges

Oranges contain a wealth of vitamin C. Studies suggest this vitamin can reduce levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system.

### Spinach

Spinach contains a lot of magnesium. Magnesium helps regulate cortisol levels and tends to get depleted when we're under pressure. 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.

### Fatty Fish

To keep cortisol and adrenaline in check, eat fatty fish. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish like salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and protect against heart disease.



### Almonds

Almonds are chock full of helpful vitamins. There's vitamin E to bolster the immune system, plus a range of B vitamins, which may make the body more resilient during periods of stress. To get the benefits, snack on a quarter of a cup every day.

### Avocados

One of the best ways to reduce high blood pressure is to get enough potassium -- and half an avocado has more potassium than a medium-sized banana. In addition, guacamole offers a nutritious alternative when stress has you craving a high-fat treat.



### Bedtime Snack

Carbs at bedtime can speed the release of serotonin and help you sleep better. Heavy meals before bed can trigger heartburn, so stick to something light like whole wheat toast and jam.

### Milk

Have a glass of warm milk. Researchers have found calcium can reduce muscle spasms and soothe tension, as well as easing anxiety and mood swings.

### Raw Veggies

Crunchy raw vegetables can fight the effects of stress in a purely mechanical way. Munching celery or carrot sticks helps release a clenched jaw, and that can ward off tension headaches.

