

REDUCE STRESS BY EATING HEALTHY FOODS

Stress and a hectic, busy lifestyle can affect your eating patterns and food choices. When feeling stressed, many people crave unhealthy carbohydrates and sugar that give an energy rush followed by a crash...leaving you hungry for more unhealthy foods (like sweets, fatty or salty food). It's a vicious cycle fueled by stress that results in: stress-related weight gain (especially belly fat), poor sleep quality, slow healing and increased risk to heart disease and diabetes.

To help break the stress cycle, try these nutritional strategies on a regular basis:

- 1. Eat a Protein-Rich Breakfast:** Skipping breakfast causes an "alarm" that releases stress hormones and eventually makes you crave sugary foods to feed the stress cycle. Your first meal of the day is important, so make a healthy choice. Protein keeps you feeling full and won't give you the "crash" that sugary foods like sweetened cereal, muffins or donuts do.
- 2. Eat Whole Foods that are Low in Sugar and Refined Carbs:** As a general rule, stick with whole foods (vegetables, beans/lentils, nuts, whole grains, fruits, and lean proteins) that are minimally processed. Avoid foods that are pre-packaged, high in sugar or fried.
- 3. Eat Small, Frequent Meals:** Keep your energy levels consistent by eating 3 small meals and 2 healthy snacks daily. Eating every 3-4 hours helps maintain blood sugar levels and helps prevent over-eating. By planning to eat healthy snacks, you're less likely to grab unhealthy snacks or fast foods that fuel the stress cycle.
- 4. Address Emotional Eating:** Ask yourself if you're really hungry when you're reaching for food. Eating to feed emotional hunger rather than your physical needs can wreak havoc on an otherwise healthy diet. Emotional eaters may eat when bored, upset, stressed, or dissatisfied. Before eating, take a few minutes to explore how you're feeling to see if you really need that food. If you struggle with emotional eating, ask for help.

SOURCE: **DR. AMANDA GUTHRIE**, BSc, ND, Naturopathic Doctor
28 Park Road (Yonge & Bloor), Toronto, ON M4W 1M1
416.944.9186 WholeHealthToronto.com

