

## **Lifestyle Counseling: The Stress Connection**

The body responds to physical and emotional stress by producing adrenal hormones. These hormones are released into the blood and prepare the body for combating perceived dangers by increasing blood pressure, heart rate and by making more energy available for fuel. This is useful when physical action is necessary to escape danger, but in today's world, there is little physical outlet for these stressors.

The body then turns the response inward, affecting organ systems such as digestive, nervous or circulatory. When this happens conditions such as ulcers, hyperthyroidism, backache, atherosclerosis, allergies, asthma, fatigue and insomnia can develop. Many of the disorders related to stress are not a direct result of stress itself, but are a result of nutrient deficiencies and increased by-products produced at the time of stress.

Your health Care Professional will discuss a nutrient supplementation program with you that is best suited to your needs. There are also a number of lifestyle changes that will help you to deal with the effects of stress.

### **DIET**

A nutrient dense diet is essential during times of stress because stress increases metabolism and therefore will increase nutrient requirements. This diet will help to reduce the stress on the adrenal glands and minimize exhaustion.

#### **Increase:**

- High potassium foods such as fish, avocado, potatoes, tomatoes and bananas.
- Water intake
- Consumption of whole grains, nuts, seeds, fresh fruit and vegetables

#### **Reduce:**

- Simple carbohydrates, processed and refined foods and high salt content foods

#### **Avoid:**

- Caffeine, alcohol and tobacco

### **EXERCISE**

Increases nutrient transport to all tissues, increases endurance and energy levels, reduces secretions from the adrenal glands, and helps to breakdown catecholamines.

Recommendation: 30-40 minutes of activity 3-4 times per week

### **RELAXATION EXERCISES OR MEDITATION**

"Turns off" the adrenals and reduces overall nutrient needs. It is also important to relax before eating by taking 3 deep breaths before you eat, this will help to improve digestion and relax the adrenal glands.

Recommendation: 10 minutes of relaxation or meditation daily

### **MASSAGE**

Increases circulation to adrenals and increases removal of waste and decreases adrenal stimulation.

### **REDUCE MAIN STRESSORS**

Identify the 5 most significant stressors in your life and develop ways to reduce their impact on your life. Implement 1 new change per week.

### **ENJOYMENT**

Above all else, have fun. Find activities that you enjoy doing and people you enjoy being with and make them a regular part of your routine.