



You Are What You Eat - Is That Good News for You?

By Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

Watch what you put into your mouth! There are some things that we eat which can increase our stress levels. I'm not a dietician, so I won't be recommending any specific diets, but there are several foods I would suggest you avoid.

Fight or Flight Foods

The consumption of foods containing chemicals that trigger fright or flight will increase your stress. Here are some of the offenders: coffee, tea, cola, chocolate, and many non-cola drinks. Even some types of nuts contain caffeine. We have total control over what we put in our mouths. We need to ask ourselves, will what I'm drinking or eating increase my heart rate, increase my blood pressure, cause anxiety, irritability or stomach acid?

You may be thinking, "You don't want to see me without my caffeine in the morning!" What we don't realize is that caffeine is merely borrowing energy from our future. Once we fuel ourselves with a proper diet, we won't require the artificial effects of caffeine to get us through our day. Eliminating caffeine for some of you would be a major struggle. Don't feel like you need to eliminate caffeine all at once. Know that you may have to endure suffering from withdrawal headaches for one to two weeks until the caffeine is out of your system. However, the long-term benefits far outweigh the short-term pain. Many people report increased energy, better sleep at night, decreased irritability and jitteriness after eliminating caffeine from their diet.

There are many alternatives to caffeine. The best alternative is water. Lots of water.

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dissipating stress.

Do you realize the first sign of dehydration is a headache? Stress triggers dehydration in the body which in turn amplifies into feelings of fatigue. Water is second only to pure oxygen for dissipating stress. Do you suffer from headaches? Perhaps it is because you're not drinking enough water. We should start our day with an eight-ounce glass of water. Here's a simple remedy: when you're taking a shower in the morning, drink in some of that warm water. Sure, some of you are thinking, "how disgusting!" Realize that ice cold water constricts your blood vessels. Warm water is much better for you. You'll be so much better off if the first liquid you pick up is water rather than caffeine.

Depletion of Vitamin B

B complex vitamins are critically important to our body in times of stress. When we are under stress, our body naturally depletes the B vitamins from our system. Additionally, there are some foods that contribute to the depletion of B vitamins: those containing refined white sugar and processed flour. When we lack B vitamins in our body, the effects include anxiety and depression. Personally, I know I'm stressed when I get depressed. When I get depressed, I want to sleep a lot, which means I'm not very productive. It can be an ugly cycle.

Consider eating meat, whole grain, green leafy vegetables, and legumes. All contain B complex vitamins which are important in stressful times. You may also consider taking vitamin B supplements if you know you are not eating in a way that will refurbish the vitamins you are losing.

Hypoglycemia or Low Blood Sugar

When you eat in a way that causes hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, your blood sugar skyrockets and then crashes. The drop in your blood sugar level can cause anxiety, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and trembling. The biggest offenders include: consuming high amounts of sugar over a short period of time and skipping meals.

Jack Groppe, a sports scientist, fitness expert and author of *The Anti-Diet Book*, finds that a good night's sleep depletes much of the glycogen stored in the liver (glycogen is the starch the body converts to glucose for energy). The brain works on two things: oxygen and glucose. If your glycogen storage is empty by morning, you must eat something for breakfast in order for you to function at a high level. Several studies show that eating breakfast is associated with improved midmorning endurance and with better attitudes toward work.

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Jack Groppe, *The Anti-Diet Book*

How can you think, be creative, or solve problems when you haven't put any fuel into your system? Breakfast is the number one meal that we should be eating. Dinner is the largest meal we tend to eat, but it's the meal we can most afford to skip. You are what you eat -- what does your diet say about you?

Often in the late afternoon hours, we feel low energy. We naturally go for some sugar to give us more energy. What we don't realize is that the immediate lift we experience is usually followed by fatigue. It's better to steer clear of sweets and instead commit yourself to eating well-

balanced, low sugar meals on a reasonable schedule. For quick and steady energy throughout the day, eat lots of fresh fruits...and don't forget that water.

*Excerpted from the book **Untying the 'Nots' of Change (before You're Fit to be Tied)**. Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.*