

First aid to stress By Frank Kuijsters

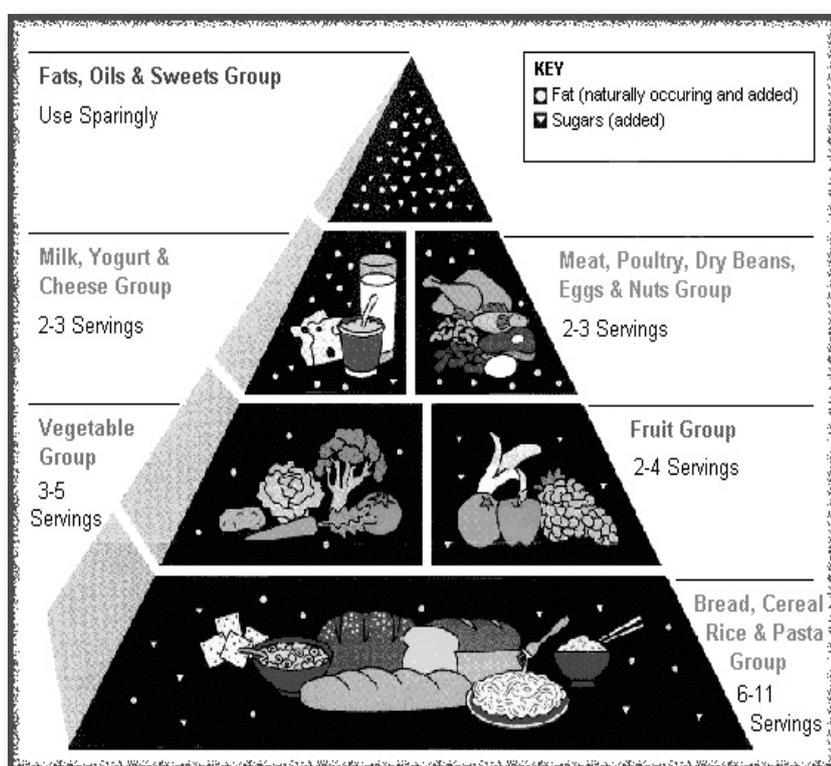
As mentioned in last month's article on Stress, the phenomenon itself is not a problem. Stress helps keeping you alert and focussed. A bit of tension can help in your performance; during or before an important presentation or meeting, in a soccer game or just when you are on a first date. If the tension or stress is there for just a short period of time the stress or tension is beneficial.

However, a constant state of stress will harm you. Your body will produce stress hormones continuously (adrenaline and cortisol). These, in excess, will attack your immune system leading to an increased susceptibility to infections and disease. In short - you will get sick. There are stress busters that can help you diminish the causes of stress and help you cope better with the effects, should you be unable

to eliminate with the root cause itself. Some of these were covered in an earlier article, but here we look at one of the greatest stress busters you can call upon; your "eating habits" can help you combat the consequences of stress. Many people suffer from stress, not only because of their work, but also because of eating badly, smoking, drinking too much, too many stressful activities, such as keeping irregular working hours, time differences and international flying.

Healthy eating. Only 2% of the worlds population eats as prescribed in the Food Pyramid Guide, there is still much to improve! When you are in constant stress a healthy eating pattern is fundamental to the maintenance of good health and well being. Good eating habits benefit almost every aspect of our health. Healthy eating means eat regularly and choose food that meets your needs.

To help you further when you are in situations of high stress the following list of 5 supplements can keep your immune system on track.



THE TOP FIVE

1. **Vitamin C:** At the top of the list is Vitamin C. This is the most important substance against stress, if used in high doses according to Geert Schuitemaker (manager of the Ortho Institute and ex-chairman of the Association for the Promotion of Orthomoleculaire Healthcare MBOG). Research showed that other animals produce more vitamin C when they are experiencing stress. But humans are not able to make their own vitamin C, so they need to take it through food or in the form of a supplement. His advice is 2000 - 4000 milligrams a day. You won't get this amount out of oranges. Vitamin C is an important antioxidant and strengthens the immune system.
2. **Multi-Vitamin Supplements:** A food supplement with all vitamins and minerals in it. Mainly useful because most people who are in stress don't eat well. Such supplements provide all important substances for us humans. Vitamin B complexes should be included because they take extra care of your nervous system.
3. **Magnesium:** This also will calm down your nervous system. Magnesium is (muscle) relaxing and effects more than 300 enzyme systems. It doesn't matter what kind of magnesium you purchase (300 milligrams a day).

4. **Anti-oxidants:** Vitamin E, beta-carotene and selenium are the best combination. They catch free radicals and protect your heart and veins.
5. **Ginseng:** If the supplements above are insufficient, a speciality of Asia, the root of a cultivated weed could do you some good. This is not really essential for the direct combating of the chemical effects of stress, but it gives you energy, helps the body and makes the mind more resistant to stress. It will give you a no rushed feeling.

Supplements not Substitutes: But as always these five substances are supplements to help the body and are no substitute for food. Always check with you doctor and don't experiment with food supplements. **ZDB**



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