



Stress

- Stress is defined as your body's way of responding to any kind of physical, emotional or mental demand. It is a real or perceived threat to your mind or your body.
- When stressed, the body's sympathetic nervous system slows everything down
 - Hunger increases, metabolism slows down, fat is stored
 - Blood sugar increases, may develop heartburn or reflux and constipation (food isn't moving properly)
- Chronic stress causes hormonal imbalances which affects weight status
- Cortisol, also known as the "stress hormone," is released during stressful situations
 - Released from the adrenal glands
 - Fight or flight response – sets off physiological responses to stress
 - Involved in fat and carbohydrate metabolism by stimulating insulin and effecting blood sugar levels
 - Helps maintain blood pressure
 - Levels of cortisol vary during different times of the day
 - Normal levels are highest in morning to increase appetite and energy levels and lowest at midnight to help sleep and repair
 - Excess cortisol excreted during physical and psychological stress, which alters the normal amount of cortisol in the bloodstream and disrupts this circadian rhythm
 - This may promote weight gain, especially around the abdomen
 - Also may make you crave unhealthy food and eat more than usual because of nervous energy
 - When cortisol released, become less sensitive to leptin, a hormone that is involved with your response to hunger and feeling full
 - So tend to eat more and crave more sugar
 - Therefore eating more in addition to decrease metabolism
- Stress decreases testosterone levels, which also is related to muscle loss and fat increase
- Lack of sleep is another stress that leads to weight gain because it also decreases leptin

80/20 Rule: No one is perfect. Set your goal to eat properly **80%** of the time.



- To break the stress cycle and decrease your weight, you must relax!!!!
 - Relaxing increases your metabolism, increases your insulin sensitivity and helps you lose weight
 - Need to train yourself to relax – not a natural state
 - Active relaxation helps calm your body and brain
 - Yoga
 - Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Hypnosis
 - Deep breathing
 - Saunas or steam baths
 - Exercise
 - Acupuncture
 - Avoid refined sugars and certain carbohydrates
 - Increase intake of fiber and omega 3 fatty acids
 - B-complex vitamins, magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, Vitamin E, lipoic acid and coenzyme Q10
 - Try herbs to reduce your stress
 - Ginseng
 - Rhodiola
 - Aswagandha
 - Licorice
 - Passion flower extract

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