

In response to stress, our heart rate accelerates, our palms sweat and our hypothalamus releases corticotrophin-releasing hormone (CRH), which stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to secrete adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). ACTH will then be transported to the kidney adrenal gland to produce corticosteroids, which is known as the stress hormone.

'Increase-stress food':

1. Coffee

Many people believe coffee helps to increase awareness and decrease stress. Coffee contains caffeine, which stimulates the central nervous system to enter "awareness" mode. Caffeine promotes increase in heart rate and blood pressure, which causes massive glucose and oxygen to be transported to the brain and muscle and increase working efficiency. However, the effectiveness of coffee only lasts for a short period of time since our body releases stress hormone when the body absorbs excessive caffeine, which might in turn affects our sleeping quantity. Therefore, inadequate hours of sleep will cause us to consume more coffee, which will make our body to release greater amount of stress hormones. Tea also contains caffeine; a cup of tea contains approximately 45mg of caffeine and a cup of coffee contains about 60mg of caffeine. Therefore, we should not consume more than 2 cups of coffee or tea daily.

2. Desserts

Many women believe dessert is a stress-relieving food; however, dessert not only causes people to put on weight, and it also causes the blood sugar levels to fluctuate. Sugar is the essential ingredient for desserts, when we consume desserts, we might have a temporary stress-free feeling. However, our blood sugar level increases and our body require secreting insulin to suppress the high blood sugar level in the body. The blood sugar levels fluctuate tremendously, which causes mood swing. Therefore, we should decrease the intake of sugary food to stabilize blood sugar levels.

3. Fattening food

A lot of people consume fattening food when they are stressful; however, massive intake of oily food not only blocks the absorption of Vitamin B, but also increases its loss, which creates greater stressful burden. In addition, excessive intake of fattening food causes obesity, fatty liver, high blood fat levels and hypertension.

There is a close relationship between stress and diet habit, our mood fluctuates due to hormone changes. Some hormones are essential for our body so we need to ingest them through our diet; we will discuss more about it on our next issue.