

Here's To Your Health!

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Foods To Calm You Down Fast

Holiday to-do list expanding too fast? Work pressures got you tearing your hair out? No date for the season's festivities? Regardless of the cause, when we're stressed we often counterintuitively turn to diet-busting goodies for comfort. Instead of soothing our frayed nerves, many of them ultimately make us feel worse.

Take the classic, curling up with a pint of ice cream. It's a total backfire. Why? Sweets are insidious: After the initial rush, the body's insulin response kicks in, causing a sudden blood-sugar drop that triggers the release of stress hormones. Soon you're feeling more jangled than you were before you inhaled that whole container of Chunky Monkey. And alcohol, of course, is a wolfish stimulant in calm sheep's clothing.



But true comfort foods do exist:

- **Berries, any berries.** Eat them one by one instead of M&Ms when the pressure's on. For those tough times when tension tightens your jaw, try rolling a frozen berry around in your mouth. And then another, and another. Since the carbs in berries turn to sugar very slowly, you won't have a blood-sugar crash. The bonus: They're a good source of vitamin C, which helps fight a jump in cortisol, a stress hormone.
- **Guacamole.** If you're craving something creamy, look no further. Avocados are loaded with B vitamins, which stress quickly depletes and which your body needs in order to maintain nerves and brain cells. Plus, their creaminess comes from healthy fat. Scoop up the stuff with whole-grain baked chips -- crunching keeps you from gritting your teeth.
- **Mixed nuts.** Just an ounce will do. Walnuts help replace those stress-depleted B vitamins, Brazil nuts give you a whopping amount of zinc (which is also drained by high anxiety), and almonds boost your E, which helps fight cellular damage linked to chronic stress. Buy nuts in the shell and think of it as multitasking: With every squeeze of the nutcracker, you're releasing a little tension.
- **Oranges.** People who take 1,000 milligrams of C before giving a speech have lower levels of cortisol and lower blood pressures than those who don't. So lean back, take a deep breath, and concentrate on peeling a large orange. The 5-minute mindfulness break will ease your mind, and you'll get a bunch of C as well.
- **Asparagus.** Each tender stalk is a source of folic acid, a natural mood lightener. Dip the spears in fat-free yogurt or sour cream for a hit of calcium with each bite.
- **Chai tea.** A warm drink is a supersoother, and curling up with a cup of aromatic decaf chai tea (Tazo makes ready-to-brew bags) can make the whole evil day go away.
- **Dark chocolate.** Okay, there's nothing in it that relieves stress, but when only chocolate will do, reach for the dark, sultry kind that's at least 70% cocoa. You figure if the antioxidant flavonoids in it are potent enough to fight cancer and heart disease, they've got to be able to temper tension's effects.



Healthy Teeth, Healthy Heart Find out how flossing could save more than your smile.

By the time we reach adulthood, most of us know that the consequences of not flossing are pretty tough on our teeth. Daily flossing is a vital part of dental care and promotes healthy teeth and gums. Sounds easy enough. But what if you knew that this simple daily ritual not only protects your mouth, but also may protect your heart and arteries? Suddenly, that little white string becomes more like a lifeline.

A blow to your smile-

When we don't floss regularly, our teeth can really suffer. A soft, sticky, bacterial film begins to accumulate on neglected teeth, especially below the gum line. Eventually the acids in these soft, sticky plaques begin to destroy the outer enamel of teeth. Gums may become irritated and bleed. Breath may start to smell bad. And after a while, these soft, sticky plaques will harden into crusty yellow or brown deposits—called tartar—and make it even easier for more plaque to stick and accumulate on teeth. Eventually, dental diseases that lead to tooth loss can take hold, resulting in a failing smile and possibly even diminished eating function or speech impairment.

As if all of this were not reason enough to floss, now research suggests that regular flossing may have health impacts beyond your mouth. Here are three ways flossing may protect your health:

1. Flossing may protect your heart

True, lack of flossing can lead to gingivitis and periodontal diseases, but the consequences of poor dental health may reach beyond your mouth and to your heart. Research has shown a distinct connection between periodontitis and cardiovascular disease. Men under age fifty with advanced periodontal disease were found to be 2.6 likely to die prematurely and 3 times more likely to die of heart disease compared to men with healthy teeth and gums.

In one emergency room study, patients who came to the ER with chest pain were found to have a higher rate of recurring gum infections. Researchers are not sure what is behind the connection, but the worrisome data makes the simple task of flossing a no-brainer for optimal health.

2. Flossing may protect your arteries

Flossing and clogged arteries also may be related. Research has revealed that the same bacteria in tooth plaque also are found in the deadly fat deposits that obstruct arteries. Inflammation is a crucial link in the causal chain that leads to plaque and arterial obstruction. Researchers speculate that bacteria from the mouth may enter the bloodstream and contribute to inflammation and artery clogging.

3. Flossing may reduce your risk of diabetes and its complications.

If you already have certain health concerns, flossing may help protect you from any further health complications. For example, periodontal disease appears to make insulin resistance worse. When cells require more insulin to take up blood sugar from the blood stream, blood insulin and eventually blood sugar levels will rise. Increases in blood insulin and blood sugar levels both have undesirable effects, the best known being the development of type 2 diabetes. To the extent that good oral hygiene reduces plaque, gingivitis, periodontal disease, and the accompanying inflammatory processes, proper oral hygiene may in turn improve insulin sensitivity of liver and muscle cells and reduce blood sugar levels and the need for insulin.

Let the string lead the way-

More and more research is pointing to ties between oral health and overall health. Even when taking into consideration other bad health habits such as smoking or excessive drinking, studies have still shown a strong link between periodontal disease and other diseases. Short of a visit to the dentist, no other single personal oral healthcare habit alone has the same ability to remove plaque between teeth and below your gum line.

Being aware of the connection between poor oral health and disease gives you one more opportunity to achieve premium wellness. The next time you floss, use these tips to get the most out of that little white string:

-Be sure to slide the floss under your gum line and also to gently curl it around each tooth as you floss.

-Floss gently, but don't quit because your gums bleed.

Eventually they will become stronger and bleed less with regular flossing.

-Use fresh floss for each tooth juncture.

-If you find it difficult to manipulate floss with your fingers, purchase dental floss picks or holders that anchor sections of floss for you in a small, U-shaped plastic device.

Source: realage.com

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The Right Running Shoes

You don't need much gear to run, but the right pair of kicks is essential

Your running shoes determine how much impact and stress your body absorbs, because each time you take a step, force travels from the ground up through your body. Running shoes protect your feet, ankles, knees, hips and even your back from this stress.

"The most important step in choosing the right running shoe is to determine your individual biomechanics, or in other words, how you move," says Sam A. Labib, M.D., an assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at Emory University and a specialist in foot, ankle and sports medicine. When you run, observe how you land on your shoes. If you land on your heel and roll to the outside edge of your shoes, you are a supinator. If you roll to the inside edge, you are a pronator. If you roll gracefully up the middle to your toes, you are gifted with being neutral. No matter how your foot rolls, if you weigh more than 180 pounds, you need extra cushioning. Knowing your personal running style is important when shopping for running shoes. It's best to go to a running specialty store where the salespeople are trained to determine which shoes suit your individual biomechanics. No matter which shoes fit your needs, the best values range from \$60 to \$80, although running shoes are not something to scrimp on or buy off-brand. Along with millions of dollars on slick marketing, the name brands spend millions of dollars perfecting shoe design. New Balance, Nike, Saucony, Asics and Reebok are (in that order) your best bets.

When shopping for your shoes, here are a few additional things to keep in mind from the American Podiatric Medical Association.



- Visit the shoe store when your feet are largest in size (at the end of a day or after a workout).
- Wear the socks you normally wear when running.
- The best-designed shoes will not do their job if they don't fit properly. As I've already mentioned, it's ideal to get fit by a running shoe specialist. When you try on shoes, make sure to stand, bend and even run in them to see how they feel. They should have adequate arch support and must not feel tight, since they will not stretch. As a rule of thumb, so to speak, press down on your shoe above your big toe with your thumb. The distance between your big toe and the tip of the shoe should be a bit shorter than the width of your thumb.

When buying running shoes, consider purchasing two pairs at a time. Here's why: To absorb the impact between the ground and your body, shoe manufacturers use a special material in most running shoes called ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA). When you run, the EVA compacts and requires about 24 hours to regain its shape. So rotating shoes every other run maintains maximum protection against pain and injury.

While shoes are the most important equipment in running, you also need to put thought into what you wear above your ankles. "Running increases your core body temperature by up to 20 degrees above the ambient temperature," says Timothy Noakes, M.D., professor in the department of physiology at the University of Cape Town Medical School in South Africa and author of *Lore of Running*. That means you need to dress according to the weather. When running on hot days, you need to protect against overheating. If it's 70 degrees F or above, you're better off wearing as little as possible, such as a tank top and shorts.

When running in cold temperatures, dress in layers so that you can peel them off as you go along. Thin layers are more efficient at keeping you warm and easier to run in than thick layers. Wear a thin long-sleeve base shirt, for example, under a long-sleeve race-type shirt with a lightweight fleece or waterproof jacket. You should feel a bit cool as you start out on your run, since your body will quickly warm up. As things do heat up, take off your top layers and tie them around your waist.

Source: menshealth.com