



Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



Healthy Comfort Foods

Have you ever planned to relax and the minute you sit down, you start craving your favorite comfort foods? You don't want to ruin your healthy diet, but you just can't stop thinking about how relaxed you'd feel if you just had that bowl of ice cream! Science shows that we crave comfort foods high in carbohydrates and sugar due to their increased production of serotonin, our body's "feel good" chemical. In times of stress, the release of this "feel good" chemical helps put our body at ease. The good news is there are plenty of foods better for our health that can give us the same calming feeling.

Chamomile Tea

Sitting down with a warm cup of tea is relaxing in general. However, studies have found that this herbal tea has anxiety-reducing effects. Chamomile tea has traditionally been used as a mild sedative for its calming effects. If you don't like tea plain, try adding honey, almond milk or cinnamon for extra flavor.

Berries

Berries are good for our health in more ways than just one. Berries contain Vitamin C and a variety of

other antioxidants that can help reduce stress. Craving something cold? Try making a smoothie with berries or "berry ice cream".

Dark Chocolate

Not all chocolate is bad for you. In fact, dark chocolate is very beneficial to add to your diet. Dark chocolate has been shown to reduce stress and lower blood pressure.



Warm Milk

Drinking a warm cup of milk before bed is a tradition that has been around for years. Warm milk is high in Vitamin D, which is a nutrient associated with health and immunity.

Sunflower & Pumpkin Seeds

Sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are a great healthy snack! These seeds are high in magnesium, which is known as the “relaxation mineral”.



Tips & Ideas:

- Make a “comfort” trail mix by mixing dark chocolate, blueberries, and seeds.
- Make an indulgent dessert by melting dark chocolate over blueberries. Or freeze chocolate-covered blueberries.
- Mix half warm milk and half chamomile tea for a two-in-one calming beverage.

References:

1. <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/7742559/why-you-crave-carbs-when-youre-stressed/>
2. <https://www.healthywomen.org/content/article/7-foods-help-you-de-stress>