

5 STRESS FIGHTING SUPER FOODS!

by [Self Magazine](#), on Mon Oct 19, 2009 8:55am PDT

Done right, noshing when your nerves are jangling can keep you calm and healthy. Munch your way mellow!

1. Spinach

Three cups of spinach supply 40 percent of your daily magnesium, a mineral that blunts stress's effects on the body by stopping blood pressure from spiking, says Beth Reardon, R.D., director of integrative nutrition at Duke Integrative Medicine in Durham, North Carolina.

Stress Rx: Stuff fresh spinach into omelets and sandwiches to nix tension while you're on the party circuit.

2. Oranges

Healthy people who were exposed to cold viruses were more likely to get sick if they were under pressure, a study from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh finds. Even a brief bout of tension can influence your immune system, but vitamin C in citrus bolsters your body's natural bug barricades, so you can stay well.

Stress Rx Having your whole family over for brunch? Pour OJ.

3. Chocolate

This treat's pacifying powers are all in your head. "Cocoa boosts your body's levels of neurochemicals, which act on parts of the brain to help produce a sense of happiness and relaxation," says Alan Hirsch, M.D., director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago.

Stress Rx: Drop some dark-chocolate squares in everyone's stocking, including your own!

4. Fish

Omega-3 fatty acids in fish such as salmon and tuna can help quell anxiety. Test takers who consumed more of the healthy fats for three weeks halted a surge in stress hormones when they were faced with a tough quiz, according to a study in *Diabetes & Metabolism*.

Stress Rx: Increase your omega-3 intake: Reach for smoked-salmon canapés from the appetizer tray.

5. Oatmeal

Spoon up serenity! The B vitamins in oats stimulate production of serotonin, a key neurotransmitter that sends soothing signals to your brain. Elisa Zied, R.D., author of *Nutrition at Your Fingertips* (Alpha Books), adds that your body digests oatmeal slowly, so you absorb the serotonin steadily.

Stress Rx: Have a bowl of oatmeal as a preshopping meal.