



## CHECKLIST FOR HEALTH

### THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

We all know we need to drink water. We need it for increasing energy / promoting weight loss / improving our complexion / regulating our body temperature / improving our mood / aiding digestion and absorption of our food / flushing out toxins, to name a few vital processes. Even mild dehydration can impair your mental and physical performance.

### HOW MUCH TO DRINK

For optimal hydration and health, it is recommended that daily total water intake should be 2.5-3.5 litres, or around 33ml of water per kilo of body weight is ideal. Add 1 extra litre of water for every hour of exercise you do. This water intake includes water from liquids (water, herbal teas, juices) and foods, with the vast majority coming from plain water. Consuming this amount of water should result in around 2 to 3 litres of dilute urine output each day.



If you get to the end of the day and have not drunk enough, try a reminder on your phone to help you remember? Buy an attractive teapot or water bottle – even a water bottle with time markers, showing you how much to drink and when. Another tip is to ensure you are drinking from a BPA-free plastic, glass or stainless-steel bottle, and sip throughout the day.

### BUT I DON'T LIKE WATER?

#### 4 ways to stay hydrated without drinking water:

1. Eat your water – fruit and vegies have a higher water content. Eat at each meal.
2. Flavour your water – make your drink interesting and you will be likely to drink more. In summer add a little lemon juice or zest, ginger, mint or even frozen raspberries for a cool treat. Soups in winter are a good way of increasing our fluid.
3. In fact sip the soup all year round – soup is great in winter, but you can also learn how to make a cold soup in summer. Have soup as an entrée?
4. Ditch the alcohol – at least avoid drinking alcohol in excess, it is a diuretic.

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## SLEEP IS ESSENTIAL

Your body uses sleep as an opportunity to heal and rejuvenate. Seven to nine hours of good quality sleep each night will complement your detoxification program. The length of sleep is important, as is your sleep quality.

Your sleeping environment is important. Ensure your bedroom is dark, well ventilated and a comfortable temperature – 19 degrees is ideal. Use blackout curtains or sleep masks if necessary and ear plugs or white noise machines to help with reducing or masking noise.

Insomnia is a disturbance in your sleep initiation or maintenance, resulting in restless and nonrestorative sleep. A regular wind-down evening routine is vital for a good night's sleep.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Ways to Support This</b>
<b>Maintain a routine</b>	Get up and go to bed at the same time each day, even on weekends. Our body has an inbuilt clock and by sticking to a regular sleep / wake cycle our body becomes adapted to it
<b>Spend some daytime outdoors</b>	Especially on waking but also throughout the day. Natural light encourages our body clock to know when to shut off and when to start producing melatonin (sleep- promoting hormone) as light dims
<b>Develop a bedtime ritual</b>	Give your body cues that it is time to slow down and sleep. Listen to relaxing music / read something soothing / do some deep breathing before bed
<b>Don't expose yourself to bright lights before bed</b>	Limit devices to reduce blue light*. Blue light disrupts your melatonin production. Dims house lights too.
<b>Have a warm bath or shower (with a few drops of lavender oil to help relaxation)</b>	This leads to an increase in body temperature and then a fall in temperature which promotes sleep
<b>Don't stay in bed if you are awake</b>	If you can't sleep, go to another room and do something mundane until you feel sleepy

\*Turning off the television, computer and mobile phone at least an hour before bed to allow your body time to wind down and prepare for a restorative night's sleep.



## STRESS LESS

Stress is a daily reality for most of us. Deadlines for work, family and social responsibilities can leave us feeling constantly 'wired'. Our body responds to these ongoing demands by releasing stress chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol, which are responsible for the 'fight or flight' stress response. For some people, ongoing stress can eventually disrupt their normal stress response.

## HOW DO I KNOW I COULD BE STRESSED?

Stress can manifest in many ways and is different for everyone. You may identify with one or a combination of these different presentations.

**Nervous tension and anxiety:** Frequent and persistent tension and anxiety may manifest as excessive fear and worry, restlessness, tightening of the chest, racing heartbeat, and in extreme cases, panic attacks. This impacts your quality of life and day-to-day functioning.

**Wired and tired:** When stress is ongoing, your brain may perceive this as an ongoing threat, mounting a stress response to keep you alert or 'wired'. This can reduce your ability to relax and wind-down, resulting in feeling not only wired but tired too – a sensation of being unable to switch-off in spite of being exhausted.

**Exhausted and flat:** In some individuals, exposure to ongoing stress may physically change the way their brain is able to respond. In these circumstances, the person is left feeling both physically and mentally exhausted, affecting performance at work and in everyday life.

**Low mood and lethargic:** Ongoing stress can lead to structural changes to brain tissues, changing the way the brain functions. Ongoing stress can also impact their resilience. This can affect the activity of brain chemicals leading to feelings of poor mood and may manifest as feelings of overwhelm, vulnerability, and lead to teary, weepy moments.

**Insomnia:** Stress can negatively impact sleep quality and quantity. This may manifest as an inability to unwind and fall asleep due to ruminating thoughts about your day, frequent waking, and/or feeling unrefreshed upon waking

## HOW TO STRESS LESS

Stress less support is important to increase your tolerance to everyday stressors, manage your mood, and give you the tools to put you back in the driver's seat to stress less.

- ✚ **Eat well** - During times of stress your body uses more nutrients than usual; however, there is also an increased need for particular nutrients, such as magnesium and B vitamins – see food lists below.



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- ✚ **Laughter really is the best medicine:** Good for both your heart and mind! Whether you prefer to watch a funny movie, listen to a favourite comedian, watch a funny video, or share a funny story with a friend. Laughter has been shown to reduce the physical effects of stress.
- ✚ **Schedule time for yourself:** Don't feel that this time has to be an hour or a day. Make it manageable for you and your lifestyle. Just as you recharge your phone battery, you have to recharge your personal battery too – so remember to take five!
- ✚ **Take a break:** If you find yourself in an unexpected stressful situation, whenever possible try to take a break and remove yourself from the event. Go for a quick five-minute walk or make a cup of tea. Take a few deep breaths and create a space where you can gather your thoughts for a few moments and restore calm.
- ✚ **Use your phone to your advantage:** Spend less time on social media and more time using a meditation app. There are many free meditation or relaxation apps available for smart phones. Find one that works for you and instead of opening a social media app, opt to open a meditation app instead.
- ✚ **Do things you love:** Hobbies are not just activities you did as a child. You are never too old to pick up a childhood hobby or involve yourself in a new one. Make time to play and be creative every day or week.

## FOODS TO INCLUDE FOR GOOD HEALTH

Certain foods are of particular benefit for decreasing stress, good health and energy production.

**Essential Fatty Acids** = Omega-3 essential fatty acids are an important structural and functional component of every cell and are therefore essential for optimal energy production. Sources of omega-3 fatty acids include small oily fish (e.g. sardines, anchovies and mackerel), as well as flaxseeds and walnuts.

**Magnesium** = Magnesium is an essential mineral that is used in over 300 biochemical processes within your body and is essential to turn proteins, fats and carbohydrates into energy. Sources of magnesium include



Brazil nuts, cashews, almonds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, tahini, barley, dried figs, wheat bran, oats and green leafy vegetables.

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**B Vitamins** = B vitamins are a group of nutrients that act together to support energy production, healthy nervous system function and optimal brain function. Eat from a variety of the following to increase your B vitamin intake: chicken, lamb, beef, wheat germ, nutritional yeast, rice bran, almonds, pecans, green leafy vegetables, bananas, seafood, and eggs.

**Iron** = As an essential component of red blood cells, iron helps transport oxygen around the body to your cells. Without sufficient iron due to low intake, poor absorption or iron losses due to menstruation and blood loss, your cells may not get enough oxygen for energy production. Iron from animal sources (such as beef, kangaroo and chicken) is absorbed more efficiently than that from plant sources (legumes, nuts, seeds, spinach).

**Phytochemicals** = Found in colourful fruits and vegetables, phytochemicals (such as polyphenols and bioflavonoids) help protect against oxidative stress and protect us from structural damage. Eat a 'rainbow' of fruit and vegetables every day, such as beetroot, carrot, berries, oranges, rainbow chard and kiwifruit, to ensure you are consuming sufficient phytochemicals for health.

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## FOODS TO LIMIT / AVOID FOR GOOD HEALTH

Equally as important as the foods to include in your diet are the foods your These are usually foods that can lead to energy fluctuations and excess calories. These foods include:

- ✚ Highly processed foods with artificial colours, flavours, or preservatives
- ✚ Hydrogenated / 'trans' fats – found in deep fried foods, some baked goods, margarine
- ✚ Foods that are high in refined sugars - such as sugar, biscuits, lollies and chocolate
- ✚ Excessive caffeine or alcohol

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## A WORD ON CAFFEINE

Caffeine enters the bloodstream and can have a stimulating effect in as little as 15 minutes, with peak levels seen about 1 to 2 hours after ingestion. Once in our body, caffeine takes between 3 to 7 hours for half of the caffeine to be eliminated, suggesting that caffeine consumed up to 7 hours before bed may reduce total hours of nightly sleep and reduce sleep quality.

If you habitually use caffeine at a low to moderate level (up to 300 to 400mg daily) this may not present problem, however repeated doses can elevate stress hormones later in the day and evening when they should be declining, thus leading to potential health issues such as hypertension and blood glucose imbalances.



Table 1. Approximate caffeine levels per serve

Caffeine Product	Approximate caffeine content per serve
Chocolate drink	5–10mg per 250ml
Instant coffee	80–120mg per 250ml
Drip or percolated coffee	150–240mg per 250ml
Espresso coffees such as espresso or latte	105–110mg per 250ml
Decaffeinated coffee	2–6mg per 250ml
Black tea	65–105mg per 250ml
Green Tea	20mg per 250ml
Cola drinks	40–49mg per 375ml
Red Bull energy drink	80mg per 250 ml
Energy drink	160mg per 250ml
Guarana	Can contain up to 100mg per 1g / guarana
Dark chocolate bar	40-50mg per 55g serve
Milk chocolate bar	10mg per 50g serve
Caffeine tablets such as No-Doz	100mg per tablet

## A WORD ON ALCOHOL

Alcohol has many physical effects, that increase with constant prolonged exposure. Effects include difficulty walking, blurred vision, slurred speech, slowed reaction times and impaired memory which can resolve after cessation of intake. Alcohol will also disturb your sleep patterns, leading to less refreshing sleep. Heavy drinking over a long period of time brain deficits may persist.

From [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org) - Alcohol can increase levels of oestrogen and other hormones associated with hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer. Alcohol also may increase breast cancer risk by damaging DNA in cells. Compared to women who don't drink at all, women who have three alcoholic drinks per week have a 15% higher risk of breast cancer.

From [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov) Even those who have no more than one drink per day and binge drinkers (those who consume 4 or more drinks for women and 5 or more drinks for men in one sitting) have a modestly increased risk of some cancer.



Table 2. A standard drink is one that contains 10gms of alcohol<sup>5</sup>.

Serving of Alcohol	Size of Drink	Percent of Alcohol
Spirits	30 mls or 1 nip	40%
Wine – red or white	100 mls	13%
Sparkling wine	100 mls	13%
Cider	285 mls	4.9%
Pot or Middy of beer	285 mls	4.9%
Pint or Schooner light beer	425 mls	2.7%

For more information on the information of alcohol content of drinks, consider the Australian Government Department of Health website – Standard Drinks Guide to be found at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol/about-alcohol/standard-drinks-guide>

## OTHER DIETARY IDEAS TO SUPPORT HEALTH

Here are some ideas to consider:

- ✚ **Eat your veggies and fruits.** Eat a seasonal variety of plant foods, that should make up ½ your plate in most if not every meal and eat them for snacks as well. Keep baby carrots, apples and bananas on hand for quick, satisfying snacks. Fruit salads are a wonderful way to eat a variety of healthy fruit.
- ✚ **Switch to whole-grain** bread and cereal and begin to eat more wholegrain rice and pasta products. Try where possible to choose gluten free products and remember they can be more refined products so keep to a minimum.
- ✚ **Spice it up.** Herbs and spices make food tasty and can stand in for salt and fat in recipes. Try a seasoning Mix 15ml (1 teaspoon) dried mustard, 15ml paprika, 15ml garlic powder, 15ml onion powder, 7ml black pepper, 5ml basil, 5ml thyme
- ✚ Use fresh & dried herbs & spices in your meals - Black Pepper, Mustard or Curry Powder, Vinegar, Fresh Garlic, Chili, Ginger, Onion & Garlic Powder, Lemon & Lime Juice, Fruit & fruit juices (orange with carrots, apricots with chicken)
- ✚ Make salad dressings from oil, assorted vinegars, garlic, herbs & spices, use balsamic vinegar on vegetables or marinades or dressings, add garlic / ginger to stir fry's, use unsalted peanut butter for Thai dishes, use juice or wine as a flavouring in marinades, stewed meats & sauces.
- ✚ **Go nuts.** Nuts and seeds are good sources of fibre, protein and healthy fats. Keep almonds, cashews, pistachios and walnuts on hand for a quick snack. Choose natural peanut butter, rather than the kind with hydrogenated fat added.



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