

The Healing Power of Food

Cortisol

What is Cortisol?

- ◆ Cortisol is a hormone that controls our stress response.
- ◆ A hormone is a chemical messenger.
- ◆ In this case it tells our body how to respond to stress.

Fight or Flight?

When we are under stress, or in the face of danger, the body has an amazing ability to provide enormous short-term strength to cope with what's to come.

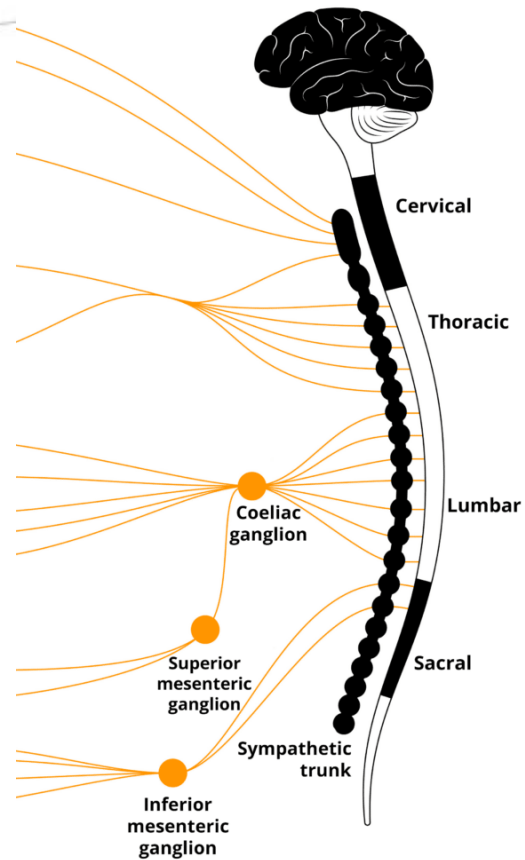
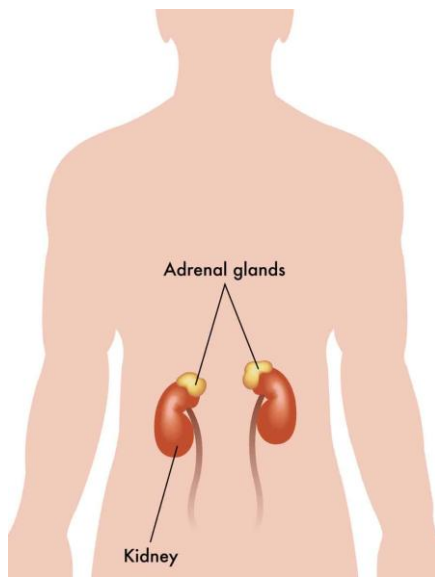
The Fight or Flight response:

- 💧 Fight – anger
- 💧 Flight - fear

The Sympathetic Nervous System

- ◆ Nerves are located in the lumbar region of the spine.
- ◆ Its role is to “turn things on”.
- ◆ These nerves send a message to the adrenal glands to release two hormones: adrenaline and cortisol.
- ◆ Adrenaline increases alertness.
- ◆ Cortisol is to increase levels of sugar (glucose), in the bloodstream to give us energy for the situation.

The Sympathetic Nervous System



The Body's Response to Cortisol

When released, Cortisol causes an increase in all of the following:

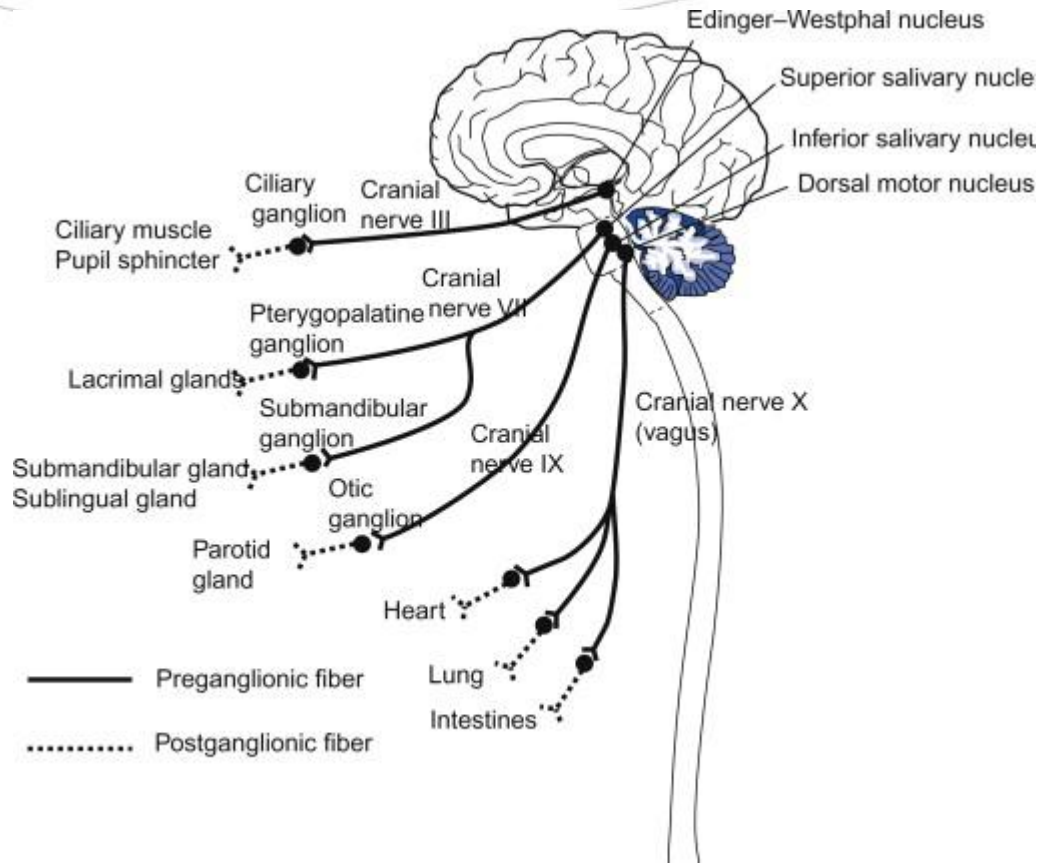
- 💧 heart rate
- 💧 blood pressure
- 💧 blood sugar
- 💧 muscle tension

The Parasympathetic Nervous System

The Parasympathetic Nervous System, located at the base of the brain, “turns things off”. It calms you down and brings you back to normal again. Once the threat is out of the way, the adrenal glands stop releasing Cortisol and Adrenalin.

- 💧 Heart rate now normal
- 💧 the digestive and the immune systems now normal
- 💧 the body’s ability to heal is able to take place
- 💧 reproductive function is now normal.

The Parasympathetic Nervous System



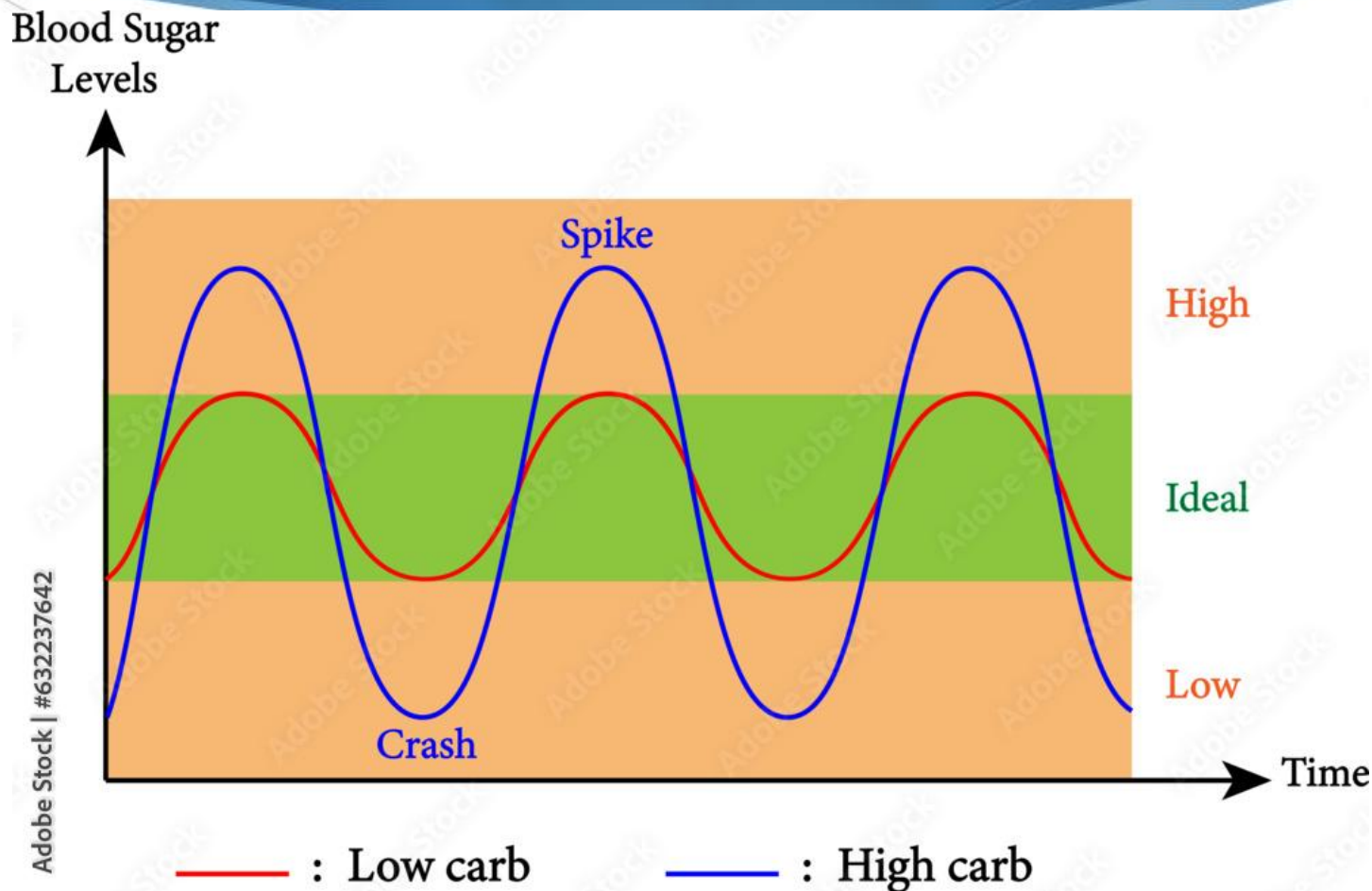
Constant Stress

- ◆ When we are under constant stress, the adrenal glands are constantly pumping out Cortisol and Adrenalin.
- ◆ The parasympathetic nervous system does not get a chance to do its job.
- ◆ The joints and spine are being stressed and prevent proper signals getting to the brain.
- ◆ The body does not make healing a priority and reduces repair, leading to weakened tissues.
- ◆ This can lead to “burn out”.

What else happens?

- ◆ Remember that the job of cortisol is to increase levels of sugar (glucose), in the bloodstream.
- ◆ The body keeps getting the message that you need to refuel after the stressful event, (which is ongoing because you are under constant stress.)
- ◆ So you do as your body says, and eat sugar, (and you crave it constantly because you are constantly under stress.)

Constant highs and lows wear out the pancreas



Symptoms of Stress Response #1

- 💧 Tendency to gain fat around the middle
- 💧 Increased appetite
- 💧 Increased cravings especially sweets and carbs, caffeine and alcohol
- 💧 Energy slump in the afternoon
- 💧 Low functioning immune system – colds, infections
- 💧 Headaches
- 💧 Nail biting, Teeth grinding

Symptoms of Stress Response #2

- ◆ High LDL cholesterol
- ◆ Blood sugar swings
- ◆ Digestive problems
- ◆ Hair loss
- ◆ Irregular or absent periods
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating / forgetfulness
- ◆ Depression

Disease can have emotional roots

- ◆ Cardiovascular diseases
- ◆ Gastrointestinal disorders (e.g. stomach ulcers)
- ◆ Respiratory issues (e.g. asthma)
- ◆ Skin conditions (e.g. eczema)
- ◆ Cancer

The way out

Deal with the problem on 3 levels:

- ◆ Nutrition – Eat nutritious, natural foods
- ◆ Exercise - Create a daily exercise routine.
- ◆ Emotional support - Share your problems with a trusted friend.
- ◆ Spiritual support - The God of the Bible tells us that we can call upon him in times of need and he will answer. Find a friend who can stand with you and pray for you.

Some Bible verses

- ◆ Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)
- ◆ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake. (Psalm 46:1-3)
- ◆ Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. (Jeremiah 33:3)

Reducing emotional stress from verbal abuse

Non-attachment:

When someone else is causing the problem, make a deliberate choice to realise that it's not YOUR problem.

It may be the problem of the other person.

If there's nothing practical you can do about it, then become detached from it. Try to 'Let it go'.

Pray for that person.

Reducing emotional stress from physical or situational abuse

- ◆ This one is more difficult.
- ◆ Is there anything you can do to CHANGE it?
- ◆ If not, you may have to LEAVE it. (e.g. your job or your place of dwelling)
- ◆ You do not have to accept physical abuse.

Emotional stress caused by your own actions

If the problem is something that YOU need to take ownership of, work out some strategies to deal with it.

- ◆ Forgive others where forgiveness is necessary.
- ◆ Don't hold on to guilt. Ask God for forgiveness and forgive yourself. Turn away from things holding you back.
- ◆ Reject feelings of inadequacy and believe that God has a purpose for you.
- ◆ Pray with others about your problems. Use Scripture.

Remember – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!” Philippians 4:13

End of Session

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thehealingpoweroffood.net