

CORTISOL: A GUIDE TO OPTIMISATION

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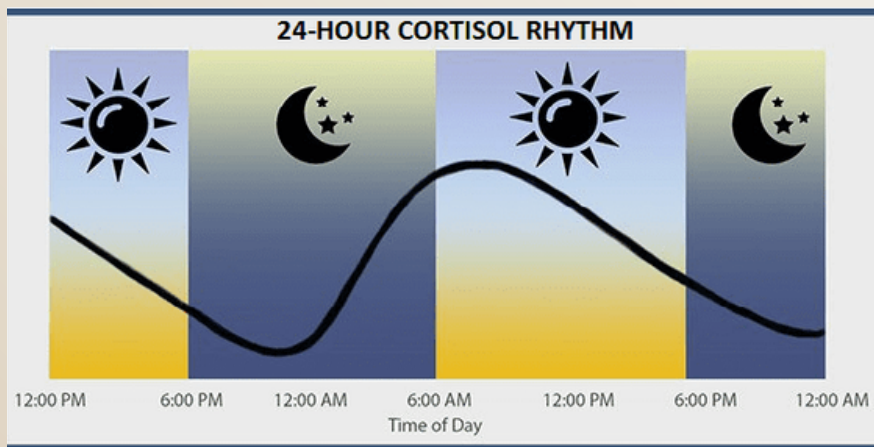


UNDERSTANDING CORTISOL PATTERNS

Cortisol, a vital hormone in your body's stress response system, follows a natural diurnal rhythm. This means it should peak in the morning to help you wake up energised, then gradually decline as the day progresses, reaching its lowest point at night to allow melatonin to take over and promote restful sleep. When cortisol follows this natural cycle, it supports energy production, blood pressure regulation, and healthy metabolic processes.

HOW LIGHT AFFECTS CORTISOL

Your body's release of cortisol is influenced by light exposure. Blue light, especially from natural sunlight, plays a key role in cortisol production. Your circadian rhythm thrives on sunlight, which helps manage your blood sugar levels, supports hormone health, and improves energy regulation. The first exposure to sunlight in the morning signals your body to produce cortisol, so getting outside for a few minutes can set the tone for your day.



OPTIMISING CORTISOL LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

MORNING TIPS TO SUPPORT HEALTHY CORTISOL LEVELS:

- **Morning Sunlight Exposure:** Try to let natural sunlight be the first light you see after waking. Exposure to sunlight in the morning helps kickstart your body's cortisol production and aligns your circadian rhythm.
- **Hydrate with Mineral-Rich Water:** Start your day with water that is rich in minerals to support hydration and metabolism.
- **Stabilise Blood Sugar with a Protein-Rich Breakfast:** Eating a balanced breakfast that is high in fibre helps stabilise blood sugar and prevent additional stress on your body. Skipping breakfast can increase cortisol levels, contributing to unwanted stress on the adrenal glands.
- **Minimise Artificial Light Exposure:** If you need to check your phone or other devices early in the morning, use blue light filters or set your phone to red mode to reduce the impact on your cortisol levels.

EVENING TIPS FOR HEALTHY CORTISOL DECLINE:

- **Dim the Lights:** As the evening approaches, limit exposure to artificial light, especially blue light, to avoid signaling your brain that it's still daytime. Opt for dim lighting to help prepare your body for sleep.
- **Wear Blue Light Blockers:** In the evening, especially if you are using devices, wear blue light-blocking glasses to reduce the impact on cortisol and support melatonin production.
- **Avoid Eating Close to Bedtime:** Eating a large meal late at night can spike cortisol and elevate body temperature, which may disrupt your sleep cycle. Aim to finish your last meal at least 3–4 hours before bed.
- **Create a Calm Environment:** Creating a calm and quiet space can support relaxation. A magnesium bath, light stretching, or a few minutes of deep breathing can help your body relax and lower cortisol levels before sleep.

LIFESTYLE TIPS TO SUPPORT CORTISOL BALANCE:

- **Manage Stress Throughout the Day:** Your body's stress response has a direct effect on cortisol levels. Techniques like mindfulness, meditation, or yoga can help lower stress and prevent cortisol from spiking unnecessarily. These practices also enhance your body's ability to respond to stress in a more balanced way.
- **Prioritise Consistent Sleep:** Adequate sleep (7-9 hours) is essential for cortisol regulation. Ensure your bedroom is cool, dark, and quiet to enhance sleep quality. Consider adding relaxation rituals like a warm bath or reading before bed to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.
- **Test Your Cortisol Levels:** If you're unsure how your cortisol levels fluctuate throughout the day, consider testing your cortisol with a saliva test to track patterns. This can give you a better understanding of where your levels may need optimisation.

SUPPORTING YOUR BODY'S RHYTHM: BEYOND CORTISOL

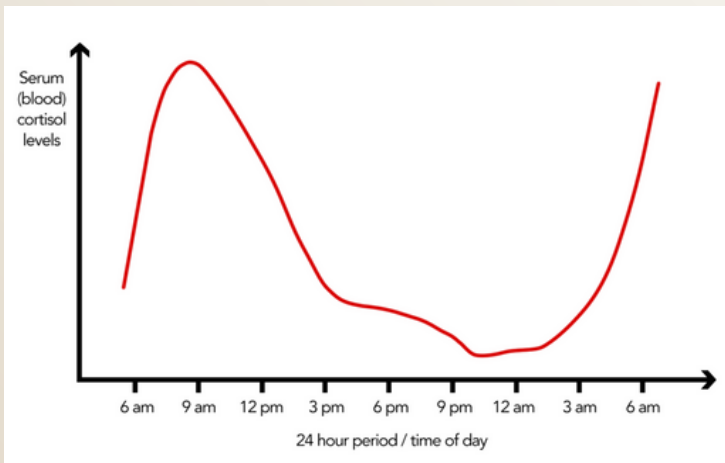
Hydration: Drink enough water throughout the day to keep your metabolism running smoothly and ensure that your cells are properly hydrated. Dehydration can worsen stress and impact cortisol balance.

Nervous System Regulation: A balanced nervous system supports your body's response to stress and its ability to regulate cortisol levels. Consider incorporating practices to regulate your nervous system, such as deep breathing exercises or progressive muscle relaxation.

Magnesium for Relaxation: Magnesium plays an important role in supporting the body's ability to relax and manage cortisol levels. You can also benefit from magnesium supplements or transdermal magnesium through baths to help lower cortisol, improve sleep quality, and promote overall relaxation.

CONCLUSION: CREATING CORTISOL BALANCE FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Balancing cortisol is crucial not just for weight loss, but for overall wellness. By aligning your exposure to light, supporting your body's natural rhythms, managing stress, and optimising your diet, you can ensure that cortisol works for you—not against you. Prioritise healthy lifestyle habits to enhance cortisol production in the morning and its natural decline in the evening, which will help you sleep better, feel more energised, and maintain healthy hormone balance throughout the day.



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THE ART OF HEALING WITH NUTRITION