

Stress Management

Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand (stressor) made upon it. The response of the body is the same regardless of the stressor. Stress is the body's physiological and psychological reaction to a situation. Stress is neither good nor bad, but rather acts as an internal alarm system that prepares your body for action.



Health and Wellness

Sources of Stress

Many things in your life, both big and small, can cause stress. Stress can be caused by high-pressure situations or events that last for a long time, such as problems at work or conflicts in your family. Other personal issues that can cause stress include your health, your relationships and major life changes.

What Are Signs of Stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to harmful situations—real or perceived. When you feel threatened, a chemical reaction occurs in your body that allows you to act in a way to prevent injury. This reaction is known as “fight-or-flight,” or the stress response. During stress response, your heart rate increases, breathing quickens, muscles tighten and blood pressure rises.

Symptoms of Stress

Emotional symptoms include:

- Becoming easily agitated, frustrated and moody
- Feeling overwhelmed, like you are losing control
- Having difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind
- Feeling lonely and/or depressed and avoiding others

Physical symptoms include:

- Low energy and insomnia
- Headaches, aches, pains, tense muscles and rapid heartbeat
- Upset stomach, including diarrhea, constipation and nausea
- Frequent colds and infections
- Nervousness and shaking, ringing in the ear, cold or sweaty hands and feet
- Dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, clenched jaw and grinding teeth

Facts About Stress

Ongoing, chronic stress can cause or exacerbate many serious health problems, including:

- Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and personality disorders
- Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease, high blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, heart attacks and stroke
- Obesity and other eating disorders
- Skin and hair problems, such as acne, psoriasis, eczema and permanent hair loss
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as GERD, gastritis, ulcerative colitis and irritable colon

Tips for Managing Stress

Use these healthy techniques to help manage and reduce stress:

1. **Take a break from the stressor.** When you give yourself permission to step away from a pressing issue, you can form a new perspective or practice techniques to feel less overwhelmed.
2. **Exercise.** Exercise benefits your mind as well as your body. Even a 20-minute walk or run can give an immediate effect that can last for several hours.
3. **Smile and laugh.** People often hold a lot of the stress in their face. Laughing or smiling can help relieve some of that tension.
4. **Get social support.** Call a friend or send an email. When you share your concerns or feelings with another person, it helps relieve stress.
5. **Meditate.** Meditation and mindful prayer help the mind and body to relax and focus. Much like exercise, research has shown that even meditating briefly can reap immediate benefits.

Sources:
www.apa.org/helpcenter/manage-stress.aspx
www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management



For more information about MyMDcares call our toll-free number.

844-405-8200 | portal.BHSONline.com username: mymdcares

Stress Management Quiz

How much do you really know about stress and anxiety?
Answer these questions to test your knowledge about stress and anxiety.



Health and Wellness

1. **Stress and anxiety are the same thing.**
True / False
2. **The causes of stress are essentially the same for everyone.**
True / False
3. **Being easily annoyed and unusually irritable can be an emotional warning sign of too much stress.**
True / False
4. **Losing weight can be a sign of too much stress.**
True / False
5. **Chronic stress can contribute to depression.**
True / False
6. **Rethinking your expectations may help you cope with stress.**
True / False
7. **Anxiety is always a negative, harmful emotion.**
True / False
8. **An anxiety disorder can be characterized by which of the following?**
A. A sudden, uncontrollable attack of terror
B. An unfounded fear and dread of everyday situations
C. Fear of saying or doing something that would be embarrassing or humiliating around other people
D. Any of the above
9. **Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States.**
True / False
10. **Men are twice as likely as women to have generalized anxiety disorder.**
True / False
11. **Which of the following is a treatment option for anxiety disorders?**
A. Medication
B. Psychotherapy
C. Both
D. Neither

Source:
www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/rm-quiz-stress-anxiety

- Answers:**
- 1. False
 - 2. False
 - 3. True
 - 4. True
 - 5. True
 - 6. True
 - 7. False
 - 8. D. Any of the above
 - 9. True
 - 10. False
 - 11. C. Both

Please note: The information provided in this document is intended for educational purposes only. Readers with questions or a need for further assistance are strongly encouraged to contact BHS at the website listed below. ©2017 BHS, All rights reserved.



For more information about MyMDcares call our toll-free number.

844-405-8200 | portal.BHSONline.com username: mymdcares