



Stress is Part of Daily Life

Types of Problem Stress

- ✓ Too much
- ✓ Too long
- ✓ Too often

What Stress Does To the Body

Stress sets off a warning sign in the brain, which responds by preparing the body for defensive action. The nervous system is aroused and hormones are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulse, deepen respiration, and tense the muscles.

Short lived or occasional episodes of manageable stress poses little risk, but long term stress, keeping the body in a constant state of readiness to respond, will increase the wear and tear to all biological systems in the body. It is when the body has been exposed to continual, unrelenting stress that physical and emotional damage can occur.

Past events from Hurricane Katrina and Rita are a current and future threat to our nation's health. Too much stress over a long period of time can literally be sickening.

Early Warning Signs of Stress

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ✓ Anxiety | ✓ Low morale |
| ✓ Bowel problems | ✓ Moodiness |
| ✓ Difficulty concentration | ✓ Muscle tension |
| ✓ Difficulty sleeping | ✓ Nervousness |
| ✓ Dissatisfaction with life | ✓ Pain |
| ✓ Disturbed relationships with others | ✓ Short temper |
| ✓ Fatigue | ✓ Sleep disturbances |
| ✓ Headaches | ✓ Stomach Problems |
| ✓ Irritability | ✓ Tension |
| ✓ Loss of appetite | ✓ Upset Stomach |

Physical Symptoms That Can Be Observed

- ✓ Increased blood pressure
- ✓ Increased heart rate
- ✓ Increased respiration
- ✓ Increased blood sugar
- ✓ Increased carbon dioxide elimination
- ✓ Increased muscle tension
- ✓ Increased oxygen consumption
- ✓ Pupils of the eyes dilate

Stress can have harmful physical and emotional effects on health and well being. If personal action is not taken to reduce stress, stress can show up in many medical conditions that affect the body and the mind.

Physical and Emotional Conditions Aggravated by Continuous Stress

- ✓ Cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, strokes
- ✓ Muscle aches or spasms (in back, neck, arms, etc)
- ✓ Impaired immune functions
- ✓ Burnout
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Injuries
- ✓ Suicide
- ✓ Ulcers

To manage or control stress, you want to reduce the feeling of tension. Tension reduces blood circulation. Blood circulation transports oxygen from the air into the blood, which then transports oxygen to all the vital organs. When blood circulation is reduced, the muscles feel it, and pain becomes a warning flag. The trick to reducing tension is to keep the blood circulating with plenty of good oxygen.