


# **STRESS**

- \* **What is *Stress*?** Stress is a physical, mental and emotional response to a challenging event — not the event itself. Often referred as the fight-or-flight response, the stress response occurs automatically when you feel threatened.
- \* Some stress can be a good. It can motivate us to focus on a task or take action and solve a problem. In this situation, stress is manageable and even helpful.
- \* Some stress can be bad. It can be very hard to concentrate, make decisions, and feel confident when a person experiences a lot of stress.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* <b><i>Good/Positive Stress</i></b> can be Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family, and other daily responsibilities.</li><li>* <b><i>Bad/Negative Stress</i></b> can be brought by sudden negative change such as losing a job, divorce, illness. Traumatic stress, (which happens when you are in danger of being seriously hurt or killed) also comes under this.</li></ul>	
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**MECHANISM OF STRESS:** Series of Responses

- 1. MOBILIZING ENERGY:** Your body releases adrenaline, your heart beats faster and you start to breathe more quickly. Both good and bad events can trigger this reaction.
- 2. CONSUMING ENERGY:** If you remain in the mobilizing energy stage for a period of time, your body begins to release stored sugars and fats. You will then feel driven, pressured and tired. You may drink more coffee, smoke more and drink more alcohol. You may also experience anxiety, negative thinking or memory loss, catch a cold or get the flu more often than normal.
- 3. DRAINING ENERGY:** If you do not resolve your stress problem, your body's need for energy will become greater than its ability to provide it. At this stage, you may experience insomnia, errors in judgment and personality changes. You may also develop a serious illness such as heart disease or be at risk of mental illness.

**SYMPTOMS:** Different people may feel stress in different ways.

- \* Feelings of irritability, sadness or guilt
- \* Change in sleep patterns
- \* Change in weight or appetite or other gastric symptoms
- \* Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- \* Negative thinking
- \* Loss of interest, enjoyment or energy in something you used to enjoy
- \* Restlessness, Sweating, Racing heart
- \* Headache
- \* Tense muscles (neck pain, shoulder pain)

**COMPLICATIONS:** Stress is considered to be a risk factor in:

- \* Mental illness
- \* Heart disease
- \* some types of bowel disease
- \* Herpes

Stress also makes it hard for people with diabetes to control their blood sugar.

People under chronic stress get more frequent and severe viral infections.

Stress has even been identified as a possible risk factor in Alzheimer's disease.

### ***How to MANAGE:***

- \* Try to find out your ***STRESSORS***- A factor which triggers stress is called Stressor. Stressors can be major events, long term worries or daily hassles.
- \* What is the stress ***BUSTERS***- A factor which helps you in stress relief. It is either Healthy or Unhealthy.

#### ***Unhealthy Busters*** include:

- \* Eating too much
- \* Smoking cigarettes
- \* Drinking alcohol or using drugs
- \* Sleeping too much or not sleeping enough

#### ***Healthy Busters*** include:

- \* Stress management.

- \* Do something you enjoy.
- \* Being physically active.

### **How to deal with *STRESS*:**

- \* Identify your problems.
- \* Work on solutions.
- \* Talk about your problems.
- \* Learn about stress management.
- \* Reduce tension. Physical activity is a great stress reducer.
- \* Take your mind off your problems and have a break.

### **CULTURAL HEALTH PRACTICES:**

- \* Meditation
- \* Tai Chi
- \* Yoga
- \* Relaxation techniques like Guided Imagery, Breathing exercises or Progressive relaxation.
- \* Dance(Frequent participation in dancing were associated with decreased depressive symptoms among students)