

Stress

Are You Stressed??

Everyone experiences some degree of stress on a daily basis, because it's a normal part of life. In fact, we need a certain amount of stress to keep us from getting bored. Too much stress, however, can negatively affect our health. It has been estimated that 90% of Americans feel high levels of stress and 59% feel this way at least once a week. High levels of long term stress have been linked to hypertension, heart disease, ulcers, frequent illness and migraines.

Assessing Your Risk of Stress

Common Symptoms of Stress

Please read through the following list and check off any of the symptoms you are experiencing. *The more you check off, the higher the chance you have of developing stress related health problems.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Over eating or binge drinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Grinding of teeth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Finger or foot tapping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tension | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sleeping or waking up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of concentration | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in appetite |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent or sudden crying | <input type="checkbox"/> Ulcers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constant worry | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in alcohol or drug use | <input type="checkbox"/> Impotence/loss of interest in sex |

Identify Your Stressors

Check off the boxes of the following issues which apply to you. This is a list of potential stressors, based on the "Social Readjustment Rating Scale" by Holmes and Rahe. It is by no means a comprehensive list, but is intended to help you rate the amount of stress you may have in your life. Stress is something that affects everyone differently; the way a situation affects someone is based on the individual's use of coping techniques and stress management skills.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> divorce | <input type="checkbox"/> mortgage over \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> death of close family member | <input type="checkbox"/> son or daughter leaving home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal injury or illness | <input type="checkbox"/> trouble with in-laws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> outstanding personal achievement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fired at work | <input type="checkbox"/> change in living conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> retirement | <input type="checkbox"/> trouble with boss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change in health of family member | <input type="checkbox"/> change in work hours or conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pregnancy | <input type="checkbox"/> change in residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change in financial status | <input type="checkbox"/> change in social activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change to a different line of work | <input type="checkbox"/> unhealthy lifestyle behaviors (drinking, smoking, drugs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change in number of arguments with spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> aging (menopause, fear of death, physical appearance) |

Managing Your Stress

The following quiz will help you assess whether or not you manage your stress effectively. Check off any statement that applies to you. *The more that apply, the higher the level of stress you may be experiencing.*

- Become impatient when performing repetitious tasks (such as, writing checks, filling out forms)?
- Dwell on the incompetencies of others who stand in the way of your progress?
- Feel antsy all the time or have a fast pulse?
- Rarely take time out to do something that you really enjoy?
- Have frequent indigestion or heartburn?
- Take quick, short, or no breaks during the day?
- Have frequent headaches?
- Have constipation or diarrhea?
- Become irritated with the mistakes of others?
- Get upset or angry if you are not the best in competitions?
- Move, walk or eat rapidly?
- Have moist palms, feet or underarms?
- Feel unenthusiastic?
- Get upset when a joke is made about you?
- Find it difficult to slow down and relax?
- Have trouble falling asleep?
- Fail to delegate tasks because you believe you can do it better?
- Find that you are unable to locate things such as papers, tools, folders?
- Feel frustrated in situations of which you have no control (such as waiting in line, driving behind a slow driver)?

This information is not intended for self diagnosis. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms on a regular basis please discuss them with your health care provider.

Coping and Relaxation Techniques

- Exercise
- Social network (having someone to talk)
- Time management
- Learn to say "NO"
- Delegating tasks
- Take up a hobby
- Deep breathing
- Meditation
- Yoga