



for your company
for your employees
for your future

April 11, 2011

WELLNESS WEEKLY

STRESS

Everyone is familiar with stress. We experience it in varying forms and degrees every day. In small doses, stress can actually be beneficial to us. It is only when the stress becomes too great, affecting our physical or mental functioning, that it becomes a problem.

In small doses, stressors can help give us increased energy and alertness. This type of stress is good and can even increase focus on the problem at hand.

As the level of pressure gets too great, stress eventually surpasses our ability to cope with it in a positive way. At this point, it is important to find positive and productive ways to deal with the stress and, more importantly, to address the person or situation that is causing the stress.

Everyone reacts to stress differently. Each of us has a different level of pressure and anxiety we can handle without a negative outcome. Only you can assess your level of tolerance to stressful situations. The best treatment for stress is to prevent getting into situations that are likely to overwhelm your ability to cope. However, this is not always possible because the stressors may often come from outside sources that are beyond your control.

Initial symptoms of stress usually affect inner emotions including feelings of:

- Anxiousness
- Nervousness
- Distraction
- Excessive worry
- Internal pressure

Continual increased stress may cause more severe physical effects:

- Excessive Fatigue
- Depression
- Headaches
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chest pain or pressure
- Heart racing
- Dizziness or flushing
- Hyperventilation or choking sensation



In most cases, these symptoms are very minor and don't last very long. If they become more severe or increase in frequency and severity, medical help should be sought. The sooner you begin the process of treatment, the easier it will be and the quicker you will be back to your normal state.

Prevention:

- Set realistic goals and limits for yourself. Put things into perspective and try not to get upset about insignificant or relatively unimportant matters.
- Take stress, time management, or anger management classes.
- Take time for yourself to relax your body.
- Maintain a positive outlook.
- Reward yourself for accomplishments.
- The key is to seek help early and be an active partner in your care and recovery. Just worrying about your problems will only make them worse. Call on your friends, family, and doctor to help you return to a full and productive lifestyle.

Ways to relax your body:

Physical activity. Exercise that increases your heart rate, such as walking, running, bicycling, or swimming-is especially useful for counteracting the harmful effects of stress. Stretching is also a good way to relieve muscle tension.

Doing something you enjoy. A meaningful activity helps relieve tension. Hobbies, creative activities, or playing with and caring for pets are great ways to help you relax. Although you may feel that you are too busy, making time to do something you like is important and can make you more productive in other areas of your life.

