

Managing Stress

Signs and symptoms of stress...

Excess stress can show itself in a manner of physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms. Common physical symptoms often reported by those experiencing excess stress include

- sleep disturbances
- muscle tension
- headache
- gastrointestinal disturbances
- fatigue

Emotional and behavioral symptoms that can accompany excess stress include

- nervousness,
- anxiety
- changes in eating habits including overeating
- loss of enthusiasm or energy
- mood changes.

People under stress have a greater tendency to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as poor nutritional choices, and excessive use or abuse of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, than their less-stressed counterparts.



How to deal with stress....

Exercise

One of the best steps to take in stress management is exercise on a regular basis. Exercise helps to turn down the production of stress hormones and neurochemicals. Thus, exercise can help avoid the damage to our health that prolonged stress can cause. In fact, studies have found that exercise is a potent antidepressant, anxiolytic (combats anxiety), and sleeping aid for many people.

Meditate

For centuries in Eastern traditions, the benefits of meditation and other relaxation techniques have been well known. Now, Western medicine and psychology have rediscovered that particular wisdom, and scientifically verified its effectiveness. Thus, a 20-30 minute meditation session each day can have lasting beneficial effects on health. Indeed, advanced meditators can even significantly control their blood pressure and heart rate as well.

Relax

It is important to take breaks and decompress. Take a lunch break and don't talk about work. Take a walk instead of a coffee break. Use weekends to relax, and don't schedule so many events that Monday morning will seem like a relief. Learn your stress signals. Take regular vacations or even long weekends or mental-health days at intervals that you have learned are right for you.

Structure

Create predictability in your work and home life as much as possible. Structure and routine in your life can't prevent the unexpected from happening. However, they can provide a comfortable framework from which to respond to the unexpected. Think ahead and try to anticipate the varieties of possibilities, good and bad, that may become realities at work or home. Generate scenarios and response plans.



Information from MedicineNet.com

Check out the following websites for more great information on stress related topics.

www.mayoclinic.com

www.stress.org

www.yogajournal.com