

Stress Awareness Month



LIVE WELL, WORK WELL

April 2022

Welcome to this month's edition of Live Well, Work Well. In this issue we will be focusing on the importance of Stress Awareness.

Stress symptoms: Effects on your body and behavior

Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even though you might not realize it. You may think illness is to blame for that irritating headache, your frequent insomnia or your decreased productivity at work. But stress may actually be the cause.

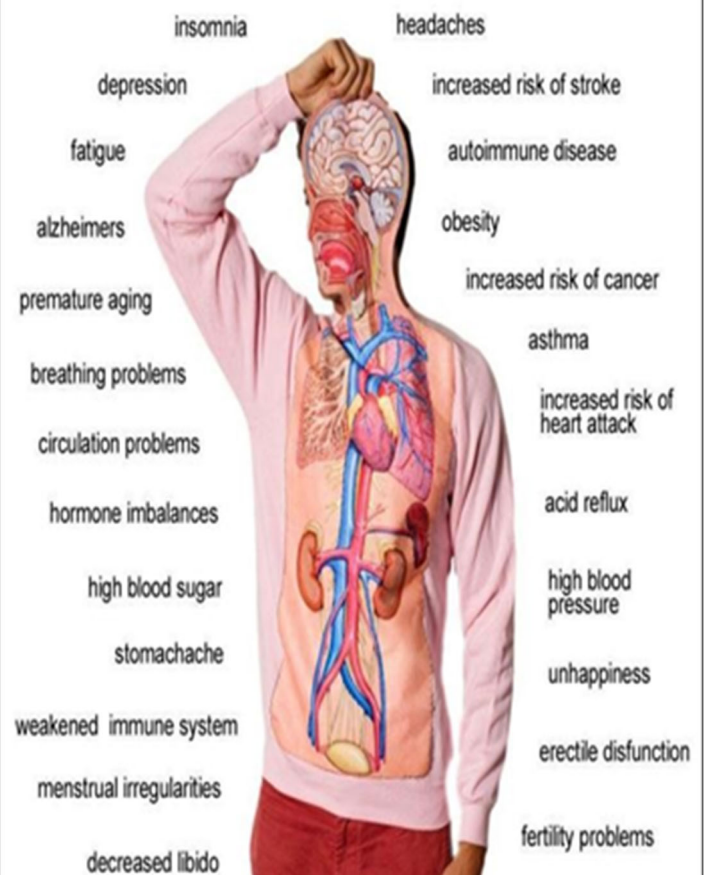
Common effects of stress

Indeed, stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behavior. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can help you manage them. Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-symptoms/art-20050987>



The Effects of Stress on Your Body



Human Resources Department
1201 E. 8th Street
Mission, TX 78572
956-580-8631
www.missiontexas.us



April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every April since 1992, but this year it seems particularly important.

Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

What does stress mean to you?

We all experience stress – yet we may experience it in very different ways. Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the most common explanation is a physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

- Disbelief, shock and numbness
- Feeling sad, frustrated and helpless
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Smoking or the use of alcohol or drugs

Affecting more than just your mind

Long-term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress.

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations, but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

Learn to overcome issues you cannot change

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have the power to change. Try to:

- Recognize when you don’t have control, and let it go.
- Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness, and personal growth, and set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.

Healthy ways for coping with your stress

Here are some basic ideas to help you cope with stress:

- Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, give yourself a break if you feel stressed.
- Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a family member, friend, doctor, pastor or counselor.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. These can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- Recognize when you need more help – know when to talk to a psychologist, social worker or counselor if things continue.

Potentially the most valuable takeaway here is knowing how to talk to others about your stress. This goes both ways, as you need to know how to discuss your problems with others as well as talk to anyone that comes to you with their issues.

<https://www.stress.org/april-is-stress-awareness-month>

5 tips to manage stress

In today's society, stress and change often are thought of as the same thing. Stress is a physiological and psychological response to situations the body and mind find to be overwhelming. We often ask ourselves how we should manage stress. There are many ways people manage stress and reduce the overall stress of day-to-day activities. With the fast pace of work and home, and being constantly inundated with technology and still wanting to have time to connect with those around us, our lives can feel overwhelming and stressful at times.

Manage how you live with these five tips to feel less stressed:

1. Use guided meditation.

Guided meditation is a great way to distract yourself from the stress of day-to-day life. There are many guided meditations available on the internet that can help you find 5 minutes of centered relaxation.

2. Practice deep breathing.

Deep breathing is a great way to reduce the activation of your sympathetic nervous system, which controls the body's response to a perceived threat. Deep breaths taken in to a count of five seconds, held for two seconds and released to a count of five seconds, can help activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which helps reduce the overall stress and anxiety you may be experiencing.

3. Maintain physical exercise and good nutrition.

Physical exercise and nutrition are two important components in how you respond to stress. When your body is healthy, your mind can be healthy and vice versa. Physical exercise is proven to be a great stress reliever and also helps to improve your overall quality of life. Nutrition is important as stress can deplete certain vitamins, such as A, B complex, C and E. Maintaining proper nutrition not only helps your body feel better, but your mind as well, which allows you to better combat stress.

4. Manage social media time.

Spending time on social media sites can become stressful, not only by what we might see on them, but also because the time you are spending on social media might be best spent enjoying visiting with friends, being outside enjoying the weather or reading a great book.

5. Connect with others.

Humans are social beings. You need to have connections with people to feel supported. Finding a sense of community — whether at work, with a religious organization, or through shared activities, such as organized sports — is important to your well-being. Enjoying a shared activity allows you to find support and foster relationships that can be supportive in difficult times.

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/5-tips-to-manage-stress>



38 Ways to Relieve Stress

In less than 10 minutes

by Sharon Martin, LCSW

- Listen to your favorite music
- Get some fresh air
- Stretch or do some yoga poses
- Do a grounding exercise
- Disconnect from technology
- Talk to someone supportive
- Meditate
- Look at photos that make you smile
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Read for pleasure
- Walk, bike, or skateboard around the block
- Count to 10 slowly and repeat
- Dance
- Journal
- Write down 10 things you're grateful for
- Doodle, draw, color, or Zentangle
- Chew a piece of gum
- Watch a funny video on YouTube
- Sit in the sun
- Punch a pillow
- Knit
- Read an inspirational quote
- Spend time with your pets
- Do 20 jumping jacks
- Do something nice for someone else
- Hug a loved one
- Visualize a safe, comforting place
- Pick some flowers (or pinecones or leaves or seashells or rocks)
- Give yourself a neck massage
- Take a shower
- Kick a soccer ball
- Diffuse essential oils or use scented lotions or candles
- Slow, deep breathing
- Savor a cup of decaffeinated tea or coffee
- Repeat a mantra
- Do a progressive relaxation exercise
- Tend your garden; water and talk to your plants
- Make a list of your worries and identify which you can do something about

How to Combat Stress with Good Nutrition

You're Never Too Busy For Good Nutrition! - As we get busy and stressed, we tend to make poor nutritional choices that can actually increase our stress levels and cause other problems. We may do this because we're in a hurry and it's easier to grab pre-packaged food that may be less healthy. Or we may do this because we crave less healthy food when we're stressed. We may get so busy we forget to eat or skip meals, filling them in with unhealthy snack foods.

Whatever the reason, when we eat an unhealthy diet, we may experience short-term and long-term consequences. We may feel less energetic, and this lack of energy can affect our productivity and stress levels. We may be less able to fight off sickness, and this poor health can affect our quality of life and our stress levels. We may be short-tempered or overly-emotional, and this can affect our relationships and our stress levels. If you've noticed a pattern, this is because nutrition can affect stress levels in so many ways.

Here are tips for getting good nutrition and maintaining a more healthy diet, even under stress. After a few weeks, they'll become habit and you won't even have to think about good nutrition. And your body—not to mention your stress level—will feel the difference!

Eat Regularly - We need to eat regularly throughout the day and not skip any meals in order to maintain blood sugar levels, but also make sure that we are not physiologically hungry. If we are stressed and craving something and physiologically hungry, it is going to be much more difficult. The first step is to always make sure that you're not skipping meals.

You may rationalize that you're not hungry yet, that you don't have time, that lunch will come soon enough, that you need to diet anyway, or that the milk in the latte you pick up on the way is all the good nutrition you need. But skipping breakfast makes it harder to maintain stable blood sugar levels and effective functioning during your busy morning; you need it. (You can easily grab a hard-boiled egg and container of orange juice on your way out the door, right?)

Opt For Green Tea - If you're a coffee junkie, you may not realize the effects caffeine has on your system. However, you can reduce your stress levels and improve your mental performance throughout the day if you gradually wean yourself off of large amounts of caffeine. A relatively easy and healthy way to do that is to replace coffee with decaffeinated green tea, which has a soothing taste and the added benefit of loads of antioxidants.

Try Sparkling Juice or Perrier - If you're a cola drinker, you're probably experiencing the same health consequences from caffeine that coffee drinkers experience. A more healthful alternative is sparkling fruit juice or sparkling water. You'll still be getting a refreshing treat, but you'll be adding water to your system, rather than detracting it (caffeine saps your system of water, so drinking it is akin to un-drinking water!), and you'll be avoiding other caffeine-related side effects.

Carry a Snack - Having some protein-rich, healthful snacks in your car, office, or purse can help you avoid blood sugar level dips and accompanying mood swings and fatigue. Fruit, nuts, trail mix, granola bars, and certain energy bars all contain good nutrition. Along these lines, you should always have water handy as it's so vital to health and proper physical functioning.

Healthy Munches - If you find that you absently munch when you're stressed, or have a pattern of snacking at certain times in the day or week, stock up on healthy choices. Replace chips, cheese puffs and other processed munchies with carrot sticks, edamame, celery sticks, and sunflower seeds. (Even popcorn is a better choice if you leave off the butter and salt!)

Brown Bag It - Many people go out for lunch to fast food places, coffee shops or restaurants that serve less-than-optimally-healthy fare. While this does save a bit of time, you can save money and usually eat much healthier if you take a few extra minutes to pack and bring a lunch from home.

Even if you only pack a lunch a few days a week, it would be an improvement over eating out for every lunch.

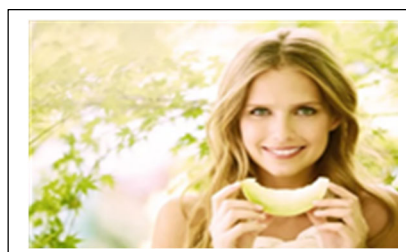
No Caffeine After 2 pm - Since caffeine has a half-life in your body of at least 6 hours, caffeine you ingest with dinner can interfere with your sleep at night.

Stock Your Home With Healthy Fare - It's easier to avoid sugary, fatty, and otherwise unhealthy foods if they're not in your home, practically begging you to eat them. This may sound like a no-brainer (yet it's sometimes harder to do than you'd expect), but you should go through your kitchen and make sure you have plenty of good-for-you foods to snack on when you're stressed.

Consider planning a menu of healthy meals and snacks at the beginning of each week, list the ingredients you'll need, and shop for everything once a week. That way you know you'll have what you want when you need it, and you won't have to stress over what to eat each night; you'll already have thought of it! (This makes eating at home much easier, too!)

Tension Tamers - Adopting stress-reducing techniques should also reduce your stress-induced cravings for unhealthy or excessive food. I recommend yoga, martial arts, journaling, laughter, and PMR; here's a fuller selection of relaxation techniques you can use to calm down and turn off your body's stress response.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-combat-stress-with-good-nutrition-3144529>



Did You Know?

How To: Better Manage Your Stress



Stress is inevitable for all of us. However, too much stress can leave you feeling overwhelmed and exhausted and can seriously interfere with your daily activities and relationships. On the other hand, too little stress can result in low motivation and drive and a general sense of dissatisfaction. With just the right dose, stress can be a good thing. It gives you the energy and motivation to get the job done. Instead of feeling like stress is consuming you or trying to completely rid your life of stress, try these tips to bring stress down to manageable and motivational levels.

- *Avoid unnecessary stressors:* Whether they be people, responsibilities, or situations, stay away from the hot seat when you can. Say no when you are able and try to amp up your time management skills to avoid those feelings of last minute stress.
- *Alter the situation:* If avoidance isn't possible or practical, find elements of the stressor that you can change. Find resources that can help so you aren't facing the situation alone. Re-frame the way that you're viewing the stressor to be sure that you aren't thinking in black and white; there's always grey to be found.
- *Adapt to the stressor:* So often the worse part of stress can be the amount of effort we put into avoiding it or allowing ourselves to succumb to it. Adjust your expectations and try to keep your eye on the big picture.
- *Accept the things you cannot change:* Stress will always be there. Always. Out of each stressful situation, there are aspects over which you have no control. Identify these as early as possible and remind yourself to instead focus on the aspects that you can control such as taking care of yourself i.e. eating right, sleeping well, and finding time to relax.



Contact your EAP:



(866) 327-2400



www.deeroakseap.com

eap@deeroaks.com

Last Month's Events:

"Sleep Awareness Seminar"

"Sleep Awareness"

Last Month's Winner: Esther Hernandez – City of Mission

Goody Bag: Umbrella, mug and hand sanitizer



"Most Spirited in Green Contest Winner"

Laura De La Rosa - \$25.00 Amazon Gift Card

"Leprechaun Bake-Off Competition"

Aida Lerma - \$25.00 Texas Roadhouse Gift Card



Upcoming Events:

Walking Program

Tuesdays and Thursdays

4:30PM at your designated facility

Health & Wellness Seminar

"Weight Loss & Bariatric Services"

Thursday, April 7, 2022

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9904662781?pwd=SGVIL3JZR>

FVRdENzWXI5VUxFT1ZUQT09

Health & Wellness Seminar

"Stress Awareness"

Thursday, April 21, 2022

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9904662781?pwd=SGVIL3JZR>

FVRdENzWXI5VUxFT1ZUQT09

Let's Get Moving



Monday

Upper Body

- 21 min

- Push-ups 20x
- Bench dips 25x
- Plank 45"
- Ab skiing 20x

Tuesday

Lower Body

- 23 min

- Lunges 25x
- Iron chair 45"
- Forward leaps 25x
- Plank jack 25x

Wednesday

Rest Day

- Free time

- Yoga
- Use a foam roller
- Eat veggies
- Stay hydrated

Thursday

Core

- 22 min

- Side plank 1"
- Sprawls 25x
- Superman 25x
- Dead bug 25x

Friday

Cardio

- 19 min

- Burpees 25x
- Squat jump 25x
- High knees 60x
- Skaters 30x