

## Stress

Stress is a fact of modern life. Learning to live and get ahead today is not possible without stress. Anything that brings on feelings of stress is called a stressor. There are some people who thrive under stress and there are others who have a hard time handling stressful situations. An individual's reaction to the stress-causing event will determine whether the stress is positive or negative. When stress levels surpass mental, emotional, and physiological limits, stress becomes distress and can interfere with functioning effectively. The following are some common symptoms, divided into categories, that people experience when they are stressed:

### Physical

- Frequent colds or flu
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Muscular aches (mainly in neck, shoulders, and back)
- Skin problems
- Trouble with digestion
- High blood pressure
- Nausea

### Mental

- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Frequent negative thoughts

### Emotional

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hostility
- Irritability
- Feelings of helplessness
- Feeling a lack of purpose
- Relationship troubles

### Behavioral

- Increase in or loss of appetite
- Driving recklessly
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Being accident prone
- Showing aggression

Living in today's fast-paced world there are many stressors that we are faced with. These may include adapting to constant, rapid change; handling a major life event, such as getting married or moving to a new home; juggling many roles and responsibilities; and going from one stressful situation to the next without taking time to relax. When one is faced with stress, certain hormones in the body are released that trigger many changes in the body, such as heart pounding, a rise in blood pressure, and tensing of the stomach and muscles. If one is often under a lot of stress, managing it is beneficial to well-being. Chronic distress increases the risk for many health disorders, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, eating disorders, ulcers, diabetes, asthma, depression, migraine headaches, sleep disorders, chronic fatigue, and certain types of cancer.