

Stress & Your Heart



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

صحة • تعليم • بحث
HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH



Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life.

Learning to identify and manage your stress can help you cope with life's daily challenges.

Q: How does stress affect your heart?

- High blood pressure
- Irregular heart rhythms
- Damage to your arteries
- Higher cholesterol levels
- Increases the development and progression of coronary artery disease
- A weakened immune system



How stress affects you:

Aches and pains

- Headache
- Backache
- Neck ache
- Stomach ache
- Tight muscles



Energy level and sleep

- Feeling tired without a good reason
- Trouble sleeping



Feelings

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Depression
- Helplessness
- Emotionally out of control
- Tense
- Clenched jaw



Other emotional signs

- Easily irritated
- Impatient
- Forgetful



Unhealthy ways of responding to stress:

- Overeating to calm down
- Speaking and eating very fast
- Drinking alcohol or smoking to calm down
- Rushing around but not getting much done
- Working too much
- Delaying doing the things needed to be done
- Sleeping too little, too much or both
- Slowing down
- Trying to do too many things at once



Stress reducers

- Begin to take note of things that cause you to feel stressed
- Accept the fact you may not be able to change certain situations
- Take time out each day to relax
- Exercise on most days

- Take care of your body and have a healthy diet
- Get enough sleep
- Take control of your schedule and prioritize what needs to be done each day
- Take time to praise yourself for a job well done
- Avoid negative “self-talk,” avoid “what-ifs” or focusing on things that you don’t know or have no control over
- Get answers to questions that may be worrying you (such as your health)
- Learn relaxation exercises



Relaxation exercises

Take a stress break and learn how to relax. There are several techniques; one of the simplest techniques is deep breathing.

Deep breathing

When you are stressed your muscles tense up, including those that control breathing. Your breathing becomes shallower and the rate increases as the body attempts to get more oxygen. To reduce this stress response:

- Sit in a comfortable position with your feet on the floor and your hands in your lap, or lie down. Close your eyes.
- Picture yourself in a peaceful place. Perhaps you’re lying on the beach, walking in the mountains or floating in the clouds. Hold this scene in your mind.
- Inhale and exhale. Focus on breathing slowly and deeply.



- Continue to breathe slowly for 10 minutes or more.
- Try to take at least 5 to 10 minutes every day for deep breathing or another form of relaxation.

Seek help

If you feel you just can't cope, ask your doctor for professional help. If stress goes on for too long it can lead to serious health problems including pain, heart disease and depression.

Useful website

www.my.cleveland.clinic.org

www.heart.org

www.heartfoundation.org

Contact

Occupational Therapy
Cardiac Rehabilitation Department
Heart Hospital - 44395653





Patient and Family Education

@ patienteducation@hamad.qa

© 2016 Hamad Medical Corporation

16-0032