

Effects of STRESS on Body, Behavior, Emotions, Thinking & Perceptions

PRIMARY STRESS RESPONSE

IMMEDIATE & URGENT RESPONSE to SERIOUS THREAT

MUSCLES Tense in readiness for action.

LUNGS Air passage dilates, breathing more intense to provide more oxygen to feed increase blood supply.

LIVER Glycogen converted to blood sugar to give 'short distance' energy.

SKIN Pales as blood diverted to vital organs.



HEART Begins to pound, sending blood around body carrying sugar (energy) and hormones (ie. Adrenalin, Cortisol).

BLOOD Thickens to help it carry more oxygen, fight infection and stop bleeding.

SWEAT GLANDS Start up to cool the underlying and overheated muscles.

DIGESTION Processes shut down as blood diverted elsewhere. Mouth goes dry to avoid adding extra fluids to stomach.

BLADDER & RECTUM Muscles relax to release any excess load.

SECONDARY STRESS RESPONSE

ONGOING RESPONSE to UN-DEALT WITH STRESS

SKIN Less blood supply can lead to diseases developing.

MUSCLES Ongoing tension leads to aches & pains, even muscle strain.

LUNGS Super-oxygenated blood can lead to blackouts and upset heart rhythms.

LIVER Body's own fats and proteins broken down and released to provide further energy.

HEART Racing heartbeat and high blood pressure can lead to strokes or heart attacks.



BLOOD Heart works harder due to thickened blood.

CHOLESTEROL DEPOSITS Plaque in blood can cause hardening of the arteries.

DIGESTION Shutdown can lead to stomach problems, particularly if you eat on the run. Increase in acidity can contribute to stomach ulcers.

WARNING SIGNS Below are some of the signs our bodies send to tell us we are stressed. Stress un-resolved. **KEY:** Early Warning Signs, *Secondary Stress Signs in Italics.*

PHYSICAL

- Muscle Tension
- Headaches
- Sleep Disturbance
- Tiredness
- Increased 'Breakouts'
- Rapid Pulse, Increased Sweating
- Nausea, Indigestion
- Flushing (face feeling hot)
- *Prolonged or Frequent Headaches*
- *Susceptibility to Mild Illness*
- *Dizziness. Faintness*
- *Breathlessness. Chest Pain.*
- *Ongoing Nausea. Stomach Ache.*
- *Ongoing Fitful Sleep*

BEHAVIOURAL

- Appetite Changes or Compulsive Eating
- Impatience
- Carelessness
- Hyperactivity
- Poor Productivity
- Low Energy
- Avoidance of Situations, Places
- Sleeping Patterns Change
- *Addictive - Increased Alcohol, Cigarette, Drug Use, Shopping, Internet, etc.*
- *Increased Absenteeism, Aggression, Irritability*
- *Sudden Tears*

EMOTIONAL

- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Moodiness. Grumpiness.
- Loss of Sense of Humor
- Withdrawal. Feeling of Isolation.
- Low Self-Esteem
- Feelings of Guilt and/or Shame
- *Extreme Anger (Over-Reaction)*
- *Loss of Libido*
- *Overwhelm Feelings: Panic Anxiety*

THOUGHTS/PERCEPTION

- Decisions-Inability to Make or Rushed
- Muddled Thinking
- Reduced Co-Ordination or Creativity
- Becoming More Vague or Forgetful
- Negative Globalization. Everything Seems to Go Wrong / Is Bad.
- Fear of Rejection
- Defensiveness
- Over-Sensitive to Criticism
- *Poor Concentration*
- *Negative Self-Talk. Fear of Failure.*
- *Feelings of 'Unfairness'*
- *Can't Switch Off*