The Effects of STRESS on your Body



PRIMARY STRESS RESPONSE

IMMEDIATE & URGENT RESPONSE to SERIOUS THREAT

MUSCLES: tense in readiness for action.

SKIN: pales as blood diverted to vital organs. **HEART:** begins to pound, sending blood around body carrying sugar (energy) and hormones (eg. Adrenalin, Cortisol)

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.

> **DIGESTION:** processes shut down as blood diverted elsewhere. Mouth goes dry to avoid adding

extra fluids to stomach.



SWEAT GLANDS:

start up to cool the underlying and overheated muscles.

BLOOD: thickens to

oxygen, fight infection

help it carry more

& stop bleeding

BLADDER & RECTUM:

Muscles relax to release any excess load.

SECONDARY STRESS RESPONSE

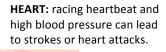
ONGOING RESPONSE to UNDEALT WITH STRESS

SKIN: less blood supply can lead to diseases developing.

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

LUNGS: superoxygenated blood can lead to blackouts and upset heart rhythms.

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



BLOOD: heart works harder due to thickened blood.

CHOLESTEROL **DEPOSITS:** plague in blood can cause hardening of the arteries.



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

WARNING SIGNS Below are some of the messages our bodies send to tell us we're stressed. **KEY:** Early Warning Signs, *Secondary Stress Signs in italics*.

PHYSICAL

- Muscle tension / headaches
- Sleep disturbance / tiredness
- Increased 'breakouts'
- Rapid pulse
- Nausea
- Indigestion
- Increased Sweating
- Flushing (face feeling hot)
- Prolonged/Frequent headaches
- Susceptibility to mild illness
- Dizziness / Faintness
- Breathlessness / Chest Pain
- Ongoing Nausea / Stomach ache
- Ongoing fitful Sleep

BEHAVIOURAL

- Appetite changes / compulsive eating
- Impatience, Carelessness, Hyperactivity
- Poor productivity / Low energy
- Avoidance of situations/places
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Increased alcohol, cigarette and drug use, addictive
- 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 shame
- Extreme anger (over-reaction)
- Loss of libido
- Overwhelming feelings of panic/anxiety

THOUGHTS/PERCEPTION

- Inability to make decisions or muddled thinking
- Reduced co-ordination/creativity
- Becoming more vague/forgetful
- Negative 'globalization' / Everything seems to go wrong/is bad
- Fear of rejection / defensiveness
- Rushed decisions
- Over-sensitive to criticism
- Poor concentration
- Negative self-talk / fear of failure
- Feelings of 'unfairness'
- Can't switch off