

## Stress

Stress is the natural reaction your body has when changes or challenges occur. It can result in many different physical, emotional, and behavioral responses. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. You can't avoid it. But stress management techniques can help you deal with it.

### **\*\*What is stress?\*\***

Stress is a natural human reaction that happens to everyone. In fact, your body is designed to experience stress and react to it. When you experience changes or challenges (stressors), your body produces physical and mental responses.

### **\*\*Types of stress\*\***

There are three main kinds of stress:

- **\*\*Acute stress:\*\*** Short-term stress that comes and goes quickly (e.g., riding a rollercoaster, an argument).
- **\*\*Episodic acute stress:\*\*** Frequent acute stress (common in high-pressure jobs like healthcare).
- **\*\*Chronic stress:\*\*** Long-term stress lasting weeks/months (e.g., financial problems, work issues).

### **\*\*Symptoms of Stress\*\***

- **\*\*Physical:\*\*** Headaches, dizziness, high blood pressure, digestive issues, chest pain, muscle tension, weakened immune system.
- **\*\*Psychological:\*\*** Anxiety, irritability, depression, panic attacks, sadness.
- **\*\*Behavioral:\*\*** Overeating, substance use, gambling, compulsive behaviors (shopping, internet browsing).

### **\*\*Stress Rash\*\***

Pink or discolored raised bumps (hives) triggered by stress. More common in women aged 20–40. Treatable with antihistamines, but stress management is key.

### **\*\*Causes of Stress\*\***

- Life changes (marriage, divorce, moving, retirement).
- Work/school pressures (exams, presentations).
- Daily hassles (traffic, running late).

### **\*\*Complications of Chronic Stress\*\***

- Immune system: Arthritis, fibromyalgia.
- Digestive system: Ulcers, IBS.
- Cardiovascular: High blood pressure, heart palpitations.
- Mental health: Depression, anxiety.

### **\*\*Diagnosis\*\***

Stress is subjective; healthcare providers may use questionnaires. Chronic stress symptoms (e.g., hypertension) can be medically evaluated.

**\*\*Stress Relief & Prevention\*\***

- Exercise (even short walks help).
- Set daily/weekly goals.
- Practice gratitude and relaxation (meditation, yoga).
- Prioritize sleep, nutrition, and social connections.
- Learn to say "no" and accept uncontrollable situations.

**\*\*When to Seek Help\*\***

- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Physical health decline.
- Symptoms persist despite self-care.
- Using drugs/alcohol to cope.

**\*\*Prognosis\*\***

Stress can be short-term or chronic. Management techniques can mitigate its effects.