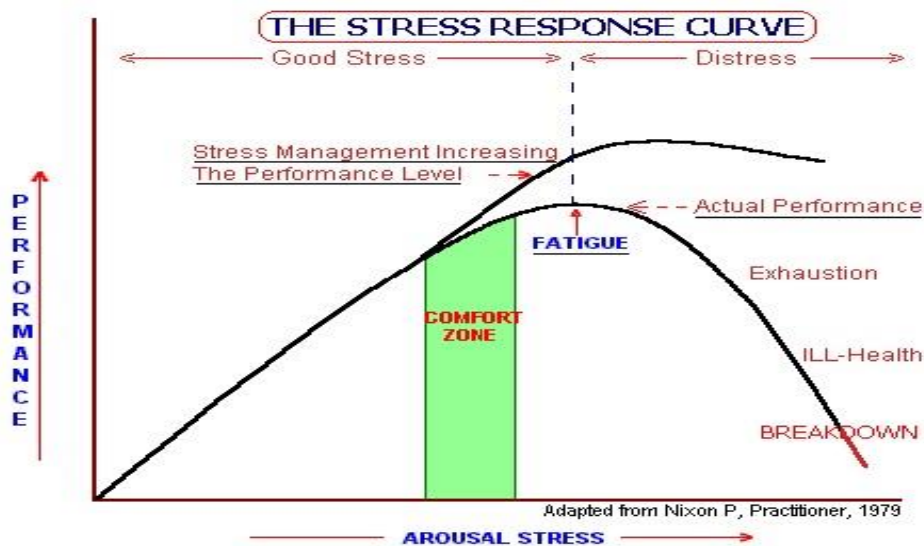


# Managing stress

**Stress is defined as the biological response to demand for exertion (effort) –Hans Selye.**



Something unpleasant which happens to you makes you react so that the factor causing the irritation is removed or neutralized. The body feels that it has been threatened and prepares you for avoiding the factor which is cause of the unpleasantness or gives you the will to fight the irritant. Reaction to stress is universal and ensures the survival of individual in the short term.



**Keep 'pressure' within limits, and you will be okay and healthy!**

## **Exceed limits and you will have to pay for it!**

### **There are different kinds of stress: Not all kinds of stress are equally bad.**

**Eustress:** Some kinds of stressors are good for enhancing productivity. These are referred to as **Eustressors**. They are manageable and can lead to growth and enhanced competence.

**Distress:** Uncontrollable, prolonged, or overwhelming stress is destructive.

**Acute Stress:** Short term intense stress. Immediate response to a threat or challenge

**Chronic Stress:** Ongoing exposure to stress, may seem unrelenting or unending.

How bad stress can affect you depends on the duration and the intensity of the stress factor. So, a low intensity stress working over a longer period can be as bad as a high intensity stress working over a shorter period of time. Stress over long periods without an outlet harms. Such stressors cause worry and anxiety, make it difficult to think and makes life miserable.

## **What causes stress?**

### **The source of stress can be:**

- Environment; bad weather conditions, pollen, traffic, noise, cramped space for working, cluttered work environment, poor equipment, etc.
- Social; work, school, friends, finances, interpersonal factors
- Physiological; body changes, inadequate sleep, illness
- Thoughts; interpretation (irrational thinking)

### **Work stress**

- Chronic work overload
- Unfair treatment
- Impossible expectations of your boss
- Unsupportive or hostile coworkers
- Inadequate training
- Lack of recognition or rewards
- Your values conflict with boss or coworkers

- Unpleasant work environment
- Lack of clear direction about priorities
- What happens when stress works on you?

**Do we all respond to stress in the same way?**

**Stress response depends on Personality!**

**Some of us Type A and others Type B personalities**

**Take the following test in a separate document given to you. Check your score.**

So, are you Type A person or a Type B person?

**Type A people often suffer due to stress**

**Question: Does stress depend only on external factors?**

Many believe that external factors cause stress. Inference is that the environment has to be changed. Is this so? The answer is 'No'.

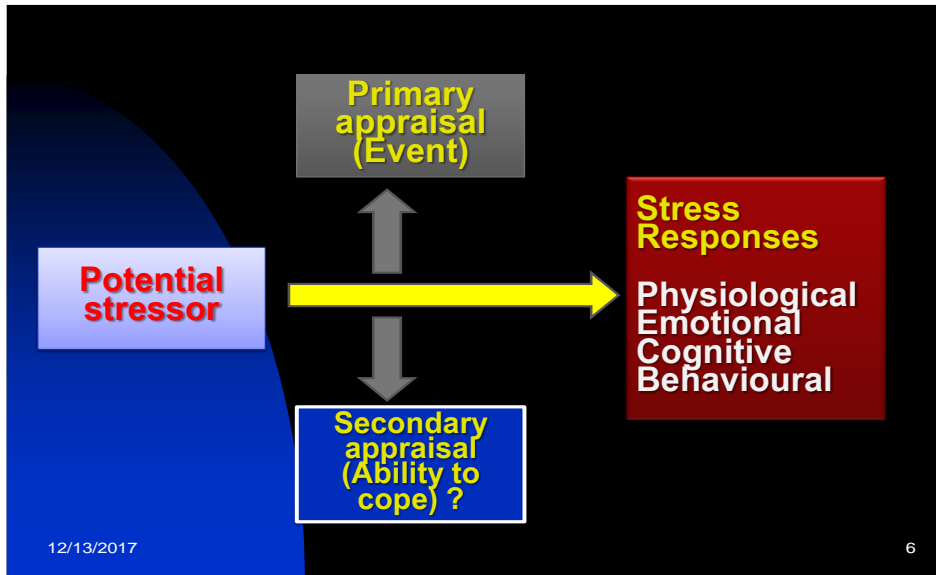
*Stress can come from within depending on the way we look at life*

**You are free to choose what is going to be stressful to you and what isn't**

**Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles, but it sure takes away today's peace**

**What do mean by that?** It is internal and is connected with the inner personality of a person. The personality of each individual makes us different and defines our individuality. Stress depends on the way we look at the world.

## Next we look at the psychology of stress



A potential stressor can harm a person only under two conditions:

1. Event which caused stress has to be important enough to be a serious threat
2. The person is unable to cope with stress

If your answer to both conditions is "Yes" you get stress

If the answer to any one of the two conditions, stress doesn't happen

## How to know when you are stressed?

1. Feel tired even after sleeping for eight hours or more
2. Often you have weird dreams (Your brain is trying sort out problem issues)
3. Motivation and memory are impaired
4. Easy to catch infections
5. Wake up early even though you had no such plan to do so
6. Ravenous but eating does not make you feel that you are full

# **Uncontrolled Stress can cause depression!**

## Symptoms associated with depression

- Always feeling tired, in spite of sleeping
- Feeling worthless
- Loss of appetite
- Sadness, hopelessness
- Simply blank
- Extreme anxiety
- Loss of weight
- Lack of interest in sex life
- Suicidal thoughts

### **Physical checks**

- Regular indigestion
- Loss of sleep
- Skin eruptions
- Frequent backaches
- Easy to catch infections
- Feeling dizzy or shaky

### **Emotional checks**

- Forgetting things a lot
- Difficult to make decisions
- Feeling restless
- Frustration
- Impatient
- Lack of concentration
- Feeling that everything is pointless
- Unable to keep up with things
- Feeling defensive

## Stressed people sleep less



Source: Survey of 1,000 People

Sleep Judge



**Stress can kill you one way or another**

## Stress kills

- Heart disease
- Colitis
- High blood pressure
- Asthma
- Rheumatism
- Skin allergies
- Sexual dysfunction
- Migraines
- Irritability
- Eating disorders

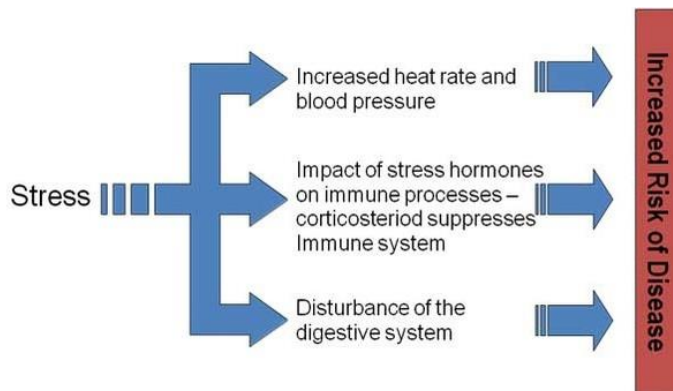
- Strokes
- Hardening of arteries
- **Diabetes**
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Ulcers
- Breathing problems
- **Depression**
- Kidney disorders
- Irritability

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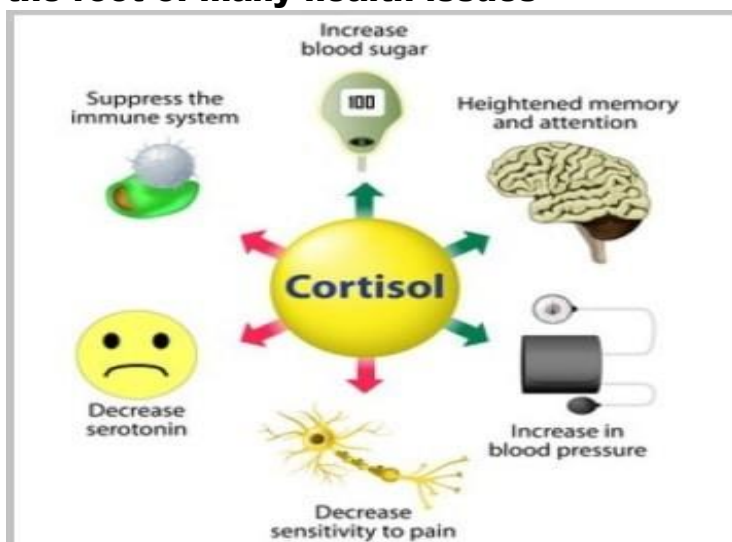
**What should you worry about?**



**All are causes leading to CVDs**



**Stress induced high cortisol levels are the root of many health issues**





## **Stress is often linked with bad lifestyles leading to vicious cycle**



***Many people believe that they always know when they are under stress.*** This idea is wrong

We get accustomed to stress, especially if the stressor is of low intensity.

***We feel that stress is something which affects only those who have high-pressure lives. This thought also is wrong.***

Explanation: We may lead unfulfilling lives without knowing the way things should be

***Some people believe that the only way to lower stress is to change your surroundings or to take medication. This too is wrong. Explanation: Stress comes from the way we perceive the world, not from the way the world really is.***

***Is it true that 'Stress is caused by events that happen to us'. Again not true!***

Explanation: It is not events in themselves that cause our distress, but rather the views we take of events -Philosopher Epictetus

## What can we do?

- Learn to plan. Disorganization can breed stress
- Having too many projects going simultaneously often leads to;
  - confusion,
  - forgetfulness, and
  - a bad sense that uncompleted projects are hanging over your head.
- Recognize and accept limits.
- Avoid setting unreasonable and perfectionist goals. We can never be perfect (perfect is the worse enemy of good)
- Set achievable goals: don't be too ambitious
- Enjoy life and occasionally escape from the pressures of life and have fun.
- Find pastimes which are absorbing and enjoyable to you no matter what your level of ability is
- Be positive towards life in general
- Avoid criticizing others
- Learn to praise the things you like in others and appreciate good things in you
- Focus upon the good qualities
- Be sure to give yourself credit for your achievements
- Learn to tolerate and forgive. Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger
- Understanding the way other people feel (empathy)
- Get regular physical exercise: choose an exercise program which could give you satisfaction and not pure hard work and drudgery.
- Avoid both superiority and inferiority complexes
- Always stay in control
- Change your thinking
- Seek social support, if necessary