

What is Stress?

“Internal or external events stimulate a sequence of physiological events called the “Flight or Fight” response (hormone activity, increased heart rate and breathing, pupils dilate, blood shunting). The stress response is essential for survival if we are fighting a war or facing other dangerous situations. However, most of the stress we experience in this technological age is psychological stress. Our bodies continue to respond with the same physiological processes, and unfortunately, since we don’t need to fight or flee, the constant bathing in stress hormones makes us more vulnerable to disease. The key to stress management is to reduce the magnitude of the flight or fight response by increasing our ability to avoid stress and/or to predict that we will have a measure of control over stressful events.

Stress is related to how we interpret and react to events. Events themselves are not stressful. People may react differently to the same situation with one person interpreting the situation as very stressful while another person may not. For example, public speaking may be a very stressful event for one person but may be relaxing to someone else.”

Symptoms of Stress

Feelings	Thoughts	Behavior	Physiology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anxiety ▪ Frightened ▪ Irritable ▪ Moody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low self-esteem ▪ Inability to concentrate ▪ Forgetfulness ▪ Preoccupation with thoughts and responsibilities ▪ Easily embarrassed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cry easily ▪ Impulsive ▪ Loss of appetite ▪ Accident prone ▪ Nervous laugh ▪ Increased smoking or drinking ▪ Grinding teeth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased sweating ▪ Increased heart rate ▪ Fatigue ▪ Diarrhea/ indigestion ▪ Dry mouth ▪ Sleep problems ▪ Loss of appetite or overeating ▪ Headaches/ pain in shoulders and neck ▪ Frequent urination