

Your Health Reference Sheet

Topic: Stress

By Carol Ritberger, PhD, Medical Intuitive

Let's face it. Everyone has stress in their lives. And, while it's possible to have times throughout the day where stress isn't driving our actions, or changing our behavior, or triggering chemical changes in our bodies, it's virtually impossible to live a stress-free life. This is especially true in these contemporary times where the pace of life is faster, the demands on time and resources are greater, and the barrage of information we deal with on a daily basis has been scientifically proven to be mentally, emotionally, and physically overwhelming and extremely stressful. Now, more than ever, it's important that we become acutely aware of what triggers the fight-or-flight response associated with stress and learn how to deal with it and manage it. This will help us to shorten its cycle, minimize its impact, and ultimately prevent the adverse effects that it has on our bodies and on our health. It's important that we remember that stress is about adapting to the challenges of life and not resisting them.

Yet, stress isn't always bad. As a matter of fact, when the stress response is first triggered, it's actually a good form of stress. Let me explain. The initial phase of stress is what heightens all of our biological systems so they can remain alert and move into action should there be an impending threat. When we first experience stress, our concentration becomes more focused, our reaction time becomes faster, and our physical strength increases exponentially.

However, the idea that stress, in general, is always good changes considerably when we look at the stress/illness connection. What we've learned is that stress is the common denominator behind many of the chronic illnesses that are affecting over 20 million Americans. A recent survey of doctors in the United States revealed that stress is a significant contributor behind 95 percent of all illnesses, and that it's the underlying contributor behind 85 percent of doctors' visits.

Yet, if we were to look at stress from the perspective of the physical body, we'd see that the body is anatomically designed to deal with the chemical changes associated with stress. That's because it's equipped with a variety of relief mechanisms, which are all designed to help the body rid itself of stress hormones. Some of the most obvious relief mechanisms are breathing, sweating, and urinating, all which are natural occurrences that happen when we find ourselves stressed. If we look at stress from this perspective, we begin to see that stress, per se, isn't really the problem. The problem is how we let it affect