

Chronic Stress

Health is a response to life. The quality of your life is affected by the state of your health. The first step to good health is to spend time to discover the factors that cause you stress and negatively influence your health.

A moderate amount of stress can be beneficial for the body. Chronic stress is defined as anything that the body has a difficult time dealing with. The negative effects on the body are the same, whether the root cause is physical, emotional, mental, spiritual or environmental. A body under continual, constant or severe stress often develops illness.

Initial Reaction to Stress:

- 🌿 Quick, shallow breathing.
- 🌿 Impaired digestion, constipation or diarrhea.
- 🌿 Headaches and tense or painful muscles.
- 🌿 Anxiety, poor memory or depression.
- 🌿 Decreased energy levels.

Deeper Level Changes:

- 🌿 Adrenal gland, thyroid and pancreas become overworked which affects energy, sleep, body repair, blood sugar and overall metabolic rate.
- 🌿 Cortisol and other hormones change affecting the heart, lungs, and circulation. This can change blood pressure, heart rate, affect breathing and impair thinking and concentration.
- 🌿 Immune system function decreases making the body more vulnerable to illness and disease.

WAYS TO DECREASE THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC STRESS

Stop!

- 🌿 An important step to regaining health is to decide to stop and take control of your life.
- 🌿 The most direct and only way to eliminate the effect of chronic stress on health is to identify and treat the root cause and find an effective outlet for your stress.

Attitude

- 🌿 A positive attitude will reduce the impact of any situation.
- 🌿 Feeling good about yourself and how you live is important in managing stress.
- 🌿 Choose to focus on what you want and what makes you happy.

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Nutrition

🌿 Eat natural, fresh food that is nutrient dense. Have daily servings of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and protein.

🌿 Avoid empty calories, like sugar; stimulants, like coffee; and processed fast food, like french fries and hamburgers. These foods are quick but lack the essential building blocks for health.

🌿 Take the time to prepare a proper meal, relax while eating, chew your food slowly and allow time for proper digestion.

Water

🌿 Water is needed for every physiological process, thought and activity. Increased levels of stress increase the need to drink more water.

🌿 Drink a minimum of 8 glasses per day.

🌿 Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, soda pop and salt as these substances dehydrate the body.

Exercise

🌿 Exercise helps the body reduce stress and release tension. Find an exercise program that makes you feel more relaxed, energized and calm when you're finished.

🌿 Engage in regular exercise of 20 - 45 minutes, two to three times a week. Add other exercises to balance off a stressful day.

Breathing

🌿 Proper breathing is the bridge between the body, mind and consciousness. It helps the body relax and release stored toxins and emotions.

🌿 Take slow, deep, regular breaths throughout the day to assist in coping with stressful situations more easily.

Sleep and Relaxation

🌿 Any form of relaxation assists your body to reduce stress, decrease the physiological symptoms of chronic stress and restore balance to the body.

🌿 Sleep is needed to repair, regenerate and restore health, as well as manage stress.

Express Your Emotions

🌿 Recognize the impact that negative emotions have on your stress level. Find safe, healthy outlets to express your emotions.

🌿 Find a reason to laugh and enjoy an aspect of every day.

Listen to your Body

🌿 What does your body 'feel like' when it is stressed?

🌿 Recognize the early warning signs of your body and learn to understand the subtle messages to prevent the body from having to 'talk more loudly'.

Work with your Naturopathic Doctor

🌿 to identify the root cause of your stress

🌿 to address the physical effects that chronic stress has had on your life

🌿 to identify specific naturopathic treatments that can support your ability to cope with stress.