

Do not sweat the small stuff..

Stress and Wellness:

Face it. Life is a balancing act. Between work, relationships, parental duties, staying fit, academic efforts, maintaining friendships, community involvement and personal fulfillment, it's a wonder most of us can even find time to catch our breath. Yet we soldier forward with all our obligations and commitments because we have to, and in most cases, we want to. But when life gets so hectic the stress of it all impacts our mental and physical well-being, it's time to take action.

Becoming familiar with the ways different types of stress can affect our minds and bodies, specifically our immune system, as well as learning about the available tools that have been clinically proven to manage the impact of stress on the immune system, are proactive steps toward keeping healthy. Lessening the impact of harmful invaders on our immune system entails not just strengthening it to combat the bacteria and viruses that cause common illnesses, but also ensuring that our immune system's response to such external stimuli as allergens is not too strong. In short, keeping our immune systems in check, but more importantly, in balance, is imperative to our overall health.

How Stress Affects the Immune System

While many aspects of our daily lives can negatively impact our immune systems—a less-than-optimal diet, travel, pollution, changing seasons, overexertion during exercise, lack of sleep and even the normal aging process—stress can also interfere with a healthy immune system.

Certain physiological changes occur to help an individual cope with stress. Chronic activation of the neurological pathways associated with stress result in the production of hormones and neurotransmitters/chemicals, which then alter the function of certain cells of the immune system. These altered cells cause the immune system to respond improperly, either by over-responding or under-responding, to bacteria, viruses, allergens, fungi and parasites.

Types of Stress

There are certain types of stressful events and situations called "stressors" that our bodies react to in different ways. Surprisingly, not all types of stressors negatively affect us. "Acute stressors" are time-limited and temporary. Public speaking and academic testing are examples of short-term stressors that temporarily boost, or over-stimulate, the immune system. The body quickly adapts itself to respond to short-term stressors through the "fight or flight" response by releasing such chemicals as adrenaline that enable our pupils to dilate, our awareness to intensify, our sight to sharpen, our impulses to quicken and our immune system to mobilize and increase activation. Much of the time increased immune system activity is a benefit to us, as it helps to ready the body for challenges, but in some cases an over-reactive immune system can result in allergies, asthma, chronic inflammation and autoimmune diseases.

"Sequential stressors" include major events that give rise to a series of related challenges, such as the loss of a spouse or a natural disaster. "Chronic stressors" are ongoing, persuasive demands that force people to restructure their identity or social roles and have no end in sight. Examples of such stressors include caring for an aging spouse or elderly parent, being victim of an event that leads to a permanent disability or fleeing a third-world country because of violence or war.

Both sequential and chronic stressors suppress, or under-stimulate, the immune system, leaving the body open for attack and more vulnerable. Other manifestations of these types of stress include: fatigue and exhaustion; headaches or migraines; neck and back pain or stiffness; gastrointestinal problems (nausea, diarrhea, constipation or colitis); chest pains or palpitations; sleep disturbances; family conflicts; job tensions; and a change in sexual energy.

You always experience the consequences of your own acts.

If your acts are right, you'll get good consequences. If not, you'll suffer for it.

Deep Sleep is essential for Total Wellness:

The process of sleep places a very high demand on our energy reserves. So much work must be accomplished while we sleep: innumerable cells must be replaced or repaired, the immune system must be balanced, hormones must be balanced and emotional distress must be resolved and integrated.

To accomplish all of this work we must have several ingredients that dictate our ability to achieve and maintain peaceful sleep.

- We need sleep rituals to trigger the cascade of events that initiate sleep. We must have the nutrients we need to sustain the sleeping process. We need an appropriate environment for sleep.

With these elements in place we have a good chance of sleeping peacefully!

Sleep rituals

More than 100 years ago a Russian physician named Ivan Pavlov discovered that our nervous system changes our entire metabolism in response to our habits. Specifically, Pavlov measured the increase in stomach acids when dogs heard the footsteps of their feeder! Your nervous system will recognize sleep rituals and begin preparing for sleep.

A sleep ritual is something you do every night to send a message to your body and brain that you plan on sleeping soon. Your body responds to these triggers by preparing for sleep. It is exactly like your stomach getting ready to digest a meal when we begin preparing it. The sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the food trigger digestive juices. Sleep rituals trigger your brain in the same way and you begin the process of sleep.

A key ritual leading to successful sleep is light control. Remember, we were designed to abide by seasonal changes in light. When the sun goes down we need to accept that the day is ending rather than artificially extending it with lights. This especially includes the artificial light of television and the computer monitor.

Try a warm bath and a light snack at bedtime. Brush your teeth and take your evening nutrients – nothing stimulating; nutrients should be specifically nourishing to the sleep process. Deep breathing exercises are especially helpful to foster deep sleep.

Nutrients for sleep

All nutrients support sleep in one way or another. However, two nutrients shine when it comes to achieving and maintaining sleep: the mineral magnesium and the vitamin biotin. Magnesium relaxes our muscles and naturally turns down the adrenaline that goes hand in hand with stressful days. Biotin stabilizes blood sugar and mobilizes protein, carbohydrate and fats for the restoring element of sleep.

Antioxidants such as CoEnzyme Q-10 (CoQ-10), Vitamin C and Vitamin E can be helpful at bedtime to support proper oxygen delivery to your brain, heart and other tissues. Anti-stress botanical preparations called adaptogens can also be useful at bedtime to dial down the influence of stress on your sleep cycle.

Peaceful environment

The most important set of rituals for peaceful sleep involves the sleeping environment: our bedroom. We simply must make our bedroom a sanctuary for sleep. If we customarily do stressful things in our bedroom such as watch TV, balance our checkbook, argue with our spouse or even read the newspaper, our nervous system will come to associate the bedroom as the place where we don't sleep!

Make sure your sleeping environment is cool, quiet and dark for the best quality of sleep. Many sleep experts recommend a temperature of 68°F, a "white noise" generator to block out sound, and less than eight total watts of light for the best sleep.

Most people who sleep substantially less than this experience a variety of unpleasant symptoms. The most common are:

- Headaches
- Mental confusion
- Irritability
- Malaise
- Immune deficiencies
- Depression
- Fatigue

Complete sleep deprivation can lead to hallucinations and mental collapse.

The best way to improve sleep involves making lifestyle changes: establish sleep rituals so your nervous system knows when to trigger the sleeping process; take the appropriate nutrients; eliminate caffeine and sugar from your diet; and create a sanctuary for sleeping in your bedroom, avoiding stimulating activities before bed.

There are always two choices, two paths to take.

One is easy. And your only reward is that it's easy.

You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong.

Morality may consist solely in the courage of making a choice.

Wickedness is always easier than virtue, for it takes a short cut to everything. But over time you learn, you can't make wrong work.

Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts will inevitably bring about right results.

You can never lose anything that really belongs to you, and you can't keep that which belongs to someone else.

Sooner or later, everyone sits down to a banquet of consequences.

Failures comes to all. Joy, happiness, love and abundance is the blessing of staying on course and true to your Life's divine purpose.

PEOPLE DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE ... YOU MUST GIVE TO RECEIVE, THEREFORE MAKE EXTRA SURE THAT YOU GIVE ONLY WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MULTIPLIED MANY TIMES OVER!

A man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth... He also reveals, within himself, the laws of thought, and understands, with ever-increasing accuracy, how the thought-forces and mind-elements operate in shaping his character, circumstances, and destiny. What goes around comes around!

Sometimes if you want to see a change for the better, you have to take things into your own hands.

Once you decide to be at the level of choice, you take responsibility for your life and gain control of it.

If you don't run your own life, someone else will.

You're in control of your life to the degree that you make the decisions.

If you let others make decisions for you, you have no control.

When you control the decisions, you control the actions.

Take charge of your life.

You don't have to ask permission of other people.

Don't give someone veto power over your life.

If not you, then who? If not now, then when?

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "how heavy is this glass of water? "

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter.

It depends on how long you try to hold it.

"If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes. "

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on. "

"As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden.

"So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can. "

"Relax; pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!"

And then he shared some ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

* Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

- * Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- * Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- * Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- * If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- * If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- * It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- * Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- * The second mouse gets the cheese.
- * When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- * Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- * You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- * Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- * We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
- * A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
- * You may Experience Failure before you reach Success!!!If you want to increase your success rate, double your failure rate!