

CHRONIC STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT**¹*Dr. Basant Kumar Singh and ²Dr. Monika**

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ABSTRACT

Stressful situations trigger a physical reaction known as the stress response. The brain relays warnings to the muscles, which tighten, and to the adrenal glands, which release stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones help your body prepare to fight or flee to safety: your heart pounds, blood pressure rises, and more of your blood is sent to your brain and muscles; your breath quickens to get more oxygen into your blood; and your body releases sugars and fats into the blood for energy. The stress response can help you navigate a difficult situation. But chronic stress can lead to physical damage. "Stress increases blood sugar and can make diabetes worse. It can create high blood pressure and cause insomnia. It can also make people become anxious, worried, depressed, or frustrated.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Ayurveda, Symptoms, Chronic Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Adrenaline, Cortisol.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is an automatic physical, mental and emotional response to a difficult event. It's a common part of everyone's life. When used positively, stress can lead to growth, action and change. But negative, long-term stress can lessen your quality of life. Stress can be a short-term issue or a long-term problem, depending on what changes in your life. Regularly using stress management techniques can help you avoid most physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms of stress. Everyone feels and reacts to stress in different ways. How much stress you experience and how you react to it can lead to a wide variety of health problems. That's

why it's critical to know what you can do to manage your stress. Adopting serenity in the face of life's challenges may help improve how you view stress and result in better quality of life and heart health. A stressful situation sets off a chain of events. Your body releases adrenaline, a hormone that briefly causes your breathing and heart rate to speed up and your blood pressure to rise. These reactions prepare you to deal with the situation, giving you what is known as "fight or flight" response. Stress can also put you at a higher risk of developing a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety. Stress is subjective — not measurable with tests. Only the person experiencing it can determine whether it's present and how severe it feels. A healthcare provider may use questionnaires to understand your stress and how it affects your life. If you have chronic stress, your healthcare provider can evaluate symptoms that result from stress.

Types of stress

There are three types of stress: acute, episodic acute and chronic.

Acute stress: Acute stress is short-term stress that comes and goes quickly. It can be positive or negative. It's the feeling you get when you're riding on a rollercoaster or having a fight with your boyfriend. Everyone experiences acute stress from time to time.

Episodic acute stress: Episodic acute stress is when you experience acute stress on a regular basis. With this kind of stress, you don't ever get the time you need to return to a calm, relaxed state. Episodic stress frequently affects people working in certain professions, like healthcare providers.

Chronic stress: Chronic stress is long-term stress that goes on for weeks or months. You may experience chronic stress due to marriage troubles, issues at work or financial problems. It's important to find ways to manage chronic stress because it can lead to health issues.

Symptoms

Body's **autonomic nervous system** controls your heart rate, breathing, vision changes and more. Its built-in stress response — the "**fight-or-flight response**" — helps your body face stressful situations. When you have long-term (chronic) stress, continued activation of the stress response causes wear and tear on your body. Stress can cause physical, psychological or behavioral symptoms.

Physical symptoms	Psychological symptoms	Behavioral symptoms
Aches and pains.	Anxiety or irritability.	Alcohol use
Chest pain	Sadness.	Gambling
Exhaustion or trouble sleeping.	Panic attacks	Eating disorder
Headaches, dizziness or shaking	Depression	Participating compulsively in sex
High blood pressure	Pessimism	Shopping.
Muscle tension or jaw clenching.	Dissatisfaction with life	Smoking
Digestive problems.	Burnout	Substance use disorder
Sexual dysfunction	Anger	Internet browsing
Immune system breakdown	Trouble in concentration	
Fatigue	Forgetting things	
	Irritability	

Complications

- **Immune system** - Arthritis, fibromyalgia and psoriasis.
- **Digestive system** - Weight gain or loss, ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome.
- **Cardiovascular system**- High blood pressure, increased heart rate and heart palpitations.
- **Reproductive system**- Infections, polycystic ovarian syndrome and infertility.

Causes

- An illness or death of a loved one.
- Marriage, separation or divorce.
- Financial issues.
- Moving to a new house.
- Going on vacation.
- Having a baby.
- Retiring.

Management and Treatment

Stress management starts with feeling good physically. Try getting some form of physical activity when you feel symptoms of stress coming on. Figuring out how stress affects your body is an important step in dealing with it. Identify sources of stress in your life and look for ways to reduce and manage them. A health care professional can help you find ways to manage your stress. Stress management or relaxation classes can also help. Look for them at community colleges, rehab programs, hospitals or by calling a therapist in your community. Even a short walk can boost your mood. You can't avoid stress. But you can stop it from becoming overwhelming by practicing some daily stress relief strategies:

Do's	Don't
Distance yourself from the source of stress	Smoking
Prioritize your sleep.	Self-isolation
Stay active.	Drugs
Eat a healthy diet.	Alcohol
Relaxation exercises.	Excess tea or coffee
Accept help	Excess use of social media or Screen time
Access respite care.	Over eating or less eating
Preventive care.	Self Rejection
Hobby	Aggressive buying
Positive Attitude & Practice Gratitude	Forced Relationships or Intercourse
Focus on what you can change.	Taking Validation from others
Lower your expectations.	Gambling
Emotional Support	
Give yourself some grace	
Take responsibility for the situation.	
Goal Setting	
Learn to say "no"	
Stay connected with people	
Consult with Doctor	
Letting go	
Cognitive behavioral therapy	
Regular Breaks	

CONCLUSION

Chronic stress may cause physical complaints, such as tension headaches, back pain, indigestion, or heart palpitations. It may appear as cognitive problems, such as poor concentration and indecisiveness. Chronic stress increases the risk of heart disease, heartburn, and many other health problems. Symptoms of stress can take many forms. Emotional symptoms of stress include crying, irritability, and edginess. Stress can also show up as negative behaviors. "Driving a car too fast, overeating, or smoking can all be behavioral symptoms of stress," The first step toward reducing stress is learning what your triggers are. "If you know what pushes your buttons, then avoid it. But there are stresses we have to accept, so we must change our reactions to them. Stressful experiences come in many forms, such as a demanding job, a chronic disease, or an argument with a loved one. But all types of stressors—even stress from positive experiences, such as planning a party—can result in the same physical and emotional burden on health, especially when you're an older adult. "As we age, our immune systems are less efficient, and adding stress to that can lead to disease progression or the onset of disease. Even with a good self-management plan, sometimes you may need more support. A mental health professional can be a great resource, but they're particularly important to see more urgently if you have thoughts of self-harm or feel drawn to

drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism. Chronic stress is something many people experience, but it doesn't mean you have to slog through it, and certainly not alone. The sooner you get care and prioritize your own healing, the sooner you can feel more like yourself.