

Understanding **STRESS**



Department of Health



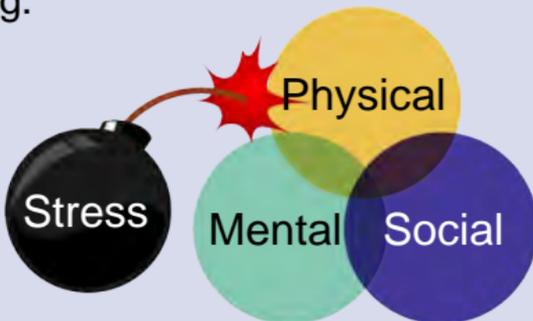
Elderly Health Service

Understanding Stress

Stress is a normal part of life. It has both negative and positive sides to it. Stress can provide us with the motivation needed for enhancement of work efficiency and performance.



However, chronic and/or excessive stress will adversely affect our physical, mental and social well-being.

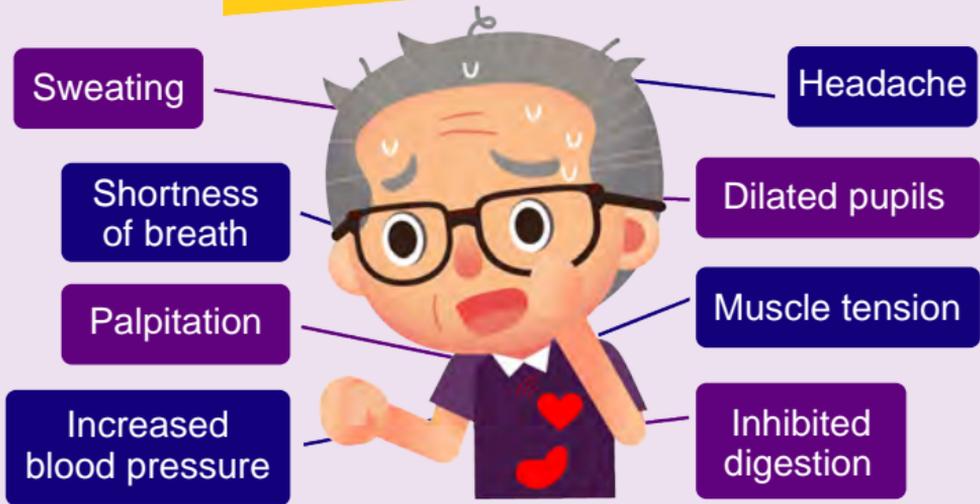


"Fight or Flight" Response

When we are under stress, the autonomic and endocrine systems in our body will be activated. This leads to a series of bodily reactions called "Fight or Flight" response.



Bodily Reactions to Stress



If the stress is only transient, the above response will subside gradually and our body will return to normal condition.

Effect of Chronic and/or Excessive Stress

When we are under excessive stress for a long period of time, the following physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive symptoms may emerge. They may worsen upon interaction among themselves, resulting in a vicious cycle.

Physical Aspect

Headache, muscle pain, weakened immune system, reduced sex drive; increased risk of heart disease, gastric ulcer, hypertension and stroke etc.



Emotional Aspect

Anxiety, depression, anger, frustration and helplessness



Behavioural Aspect

Sleep disturbance, change of appetite, decreased work performance, increased tobacco/alcohol use and social withdrawal



Cognitive Aspect

Forgetfulness, concentration difficulty and poor judgment



Effective Ways to Manage Stress

Adopt healthy lifestyle: sufficient sleep, regular physical activity, balanced diet, leisure activities and abstinence from smoking and drinking

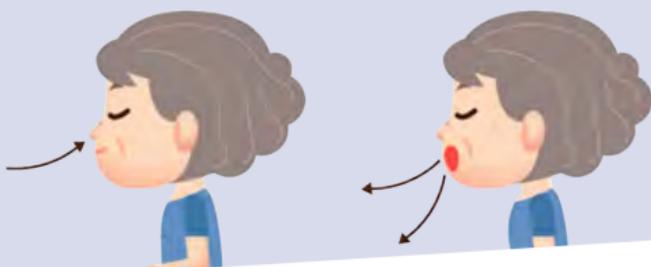


Set realistic expectation, learn time management and problem solving skills

Share with whom you trust



Do relaxation exercise such as Mindful Breathing, Diaphragmatic Breathing and Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise



If you experience chronic and excessive stress and find it difficult to cope with, please seek medical consultation promptly.

