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STRESS MANAGEMENT

**Cardiovascular Risk Management Program
CARDIOVASCULAR CARE PROGRAM**



Events are not inherently stressful, it is our reaction to these events that makes them stressful...



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Definition of Stress


A state that you experience when you believe you can not effectively cope with a threatening situation.

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Features of Stress


- Fight or Flight
- Mind/Body Connection
- Emotional and Physiological Components
- Chronic Stress vs. Acute Stress



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Acute Stress


- Acute stress is an immediate reaction to a change that is considered threatening = *Stressor*
- It can create feelings such as fear or nervousness that are intense but temporary
- The body is designed to deal with acute stress and will return to normal



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The Stress Response

- The body responds to physical and emotional stress by increased production of adrenal hormones in response to perceived danger.
- These hormones prepare the body for muscle action by increasing HR, BP and making more energy available for fuel.



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STRESS RESPONSE

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Stress Response

- Heart Rate
- Blood Pressure
- Breathing Rate



Relaxation Response

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Positive Stress

- Stress is useful when physical action is necessary to escape danger
- Stress can be helpful in the short term to mobilize action






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Negative Stress

- Stress is harmful and damaging when it is used regularly to cope with non life threatening events
- Chronic stress can compromise the ability of your immune system to fight viruses, e.g. common cold

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Chronic Stress




- Chronic stress is experienced over a longer period of time
- Chronic stress results from changes that are not addressed, leaving the body in a state of heightened awareness or tension
- Sooner or later, the energy drain on the system will cause the body to fall behind in the self-repair and maintenance needed for good health

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Stressors Related to Health Status

- Lack of control and predictability
- New situations i.e. medical appointments and tests
- Physical adaptations
- Change of family role and responsibilities
- Financial

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Physical and Behavioural Signs of Stress

Rapid, shallow breathing	Heart burn, indigestion
Increased heart rate, blood pressure	Diarrhea, constipation
Muscle tension and aches clenched fists; teeth grinding,	Dry mouth
Shakiness, tremors, tics, twitches	Excessive sweating, clammy hands
Rashes, hives, itchiness	Cold hands or feet
Frequent urination	Lowered sex drive
Over-eating or loss of appetite	Sleep difficulties; nightmares
Tiredness, fatigue	Nail biting, foot tapping


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Stress Emotions

- Frightened
- Nervous
- Tense
- Irritable
- Frustrated
- Angry
- Overwhelmed
- "Stressed out"
- "Feeling trapped"
- "Feeling pressured"





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Poor Coping


- Over-working
- Social isolation
- Over-eating or unhealthy eating
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Overuse of medication
- Smoking





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Why Should I be Concerned about Stress?

- Stress contributes to, or exacerbates certain physical and mental health diseases







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Possible Signs of Depression


- Feeling sad or unhappy much of the time
- Feeling overwhelmed or discouraged
- Not caring about things in your life or not enjoying things you usually enjoy
- Feeling tired with low energy
- Not feeling motivated to do things
- Having trouble with concentration, memory or making decisions
- Having low or excessive food cravings and appetite
- Having problems with sleep, or over-sleeping




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Stress and the Cardiovascular System


- High incidence of stressful life events in the year preceding heart attacks reported
- Chronic stress can contribute to hypertension and atherosclerosis
- Some people respond to stress with heightened cardiac reactivity
- Anger has the greatest impact of the emotions on the cardiovascular system




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Depression and Cardiovascular Health


- Depression is a clinical condition and is more common in cardiac patients than in the general population
- Depression is common in cardiac patients both following and preceding a cardiac event
- Depression is believed to increase the risk of coronary heart disease both directly by physiological mechanisms and indirectly by lifestyle factors

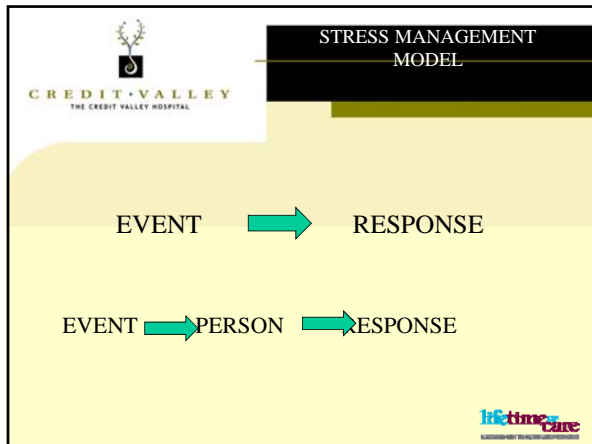


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Depression and Cardiovascular Health

- Depression reduces tolerance to stress, and leads to poor coping, e.g., smoking, inactivity
- Depressed cardiac patients are three times less likely to follow medical recommendations, e.g. take medication, attend rehabilitation programs
- Depression is more common in female cardiac patients and they are also more likely than the male patients to drop out of cardiac rehabilitation programs
- Anxiety can also be a clinical condition that may affect cardiovascular health, and often co-occurs with depression





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- ## STRESS MANAGEMENT MODEL
- EVENTS/DEMANDS
- Time Management
 - Prioritize Demands/tasks
 - Clarification/Communication
 - Negotiation
 - Delegation
 - Problem Solving
 - Flexibility
 - Setting Limits
 - Assertiveness
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- ## STRESS MANAGEMENT MODEL
- PERSON (stress from within)
- Address Poor Coping
 - Encourage Adaptive Coping
 - Address Role of Interpretation/Meaning
 - Avoid Personal Tendencies of Perfectionism, Excessive Responsibility and Rigidity
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- ## Triggers
- Important to become aware of your personal triggers so you can either change the stressful situation or change your reaction to the stressful situation
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- ## Stress Causing Thinking
- Catastrophizing...mountains out of molehills
 - Saying "I can't take it", "I can't deal with this"
 - Over-generalizing and distorting what is going on
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- ## Stress Causing Thinking (cont'd)
- Worry about the "what if"
 - Jumping to conclusions
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - Comparing yourself to the way you used to be or the way that others want you to be
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STRESS MANAGEMENT MODEL

RESPONSE

- Relaxation Techniques
- Exercise/Activity
- Rest
- Diversion and Distraction

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Formal Relaxation Exercises

- When you are under stress your muscles react and become tense
 - **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**...tighten and release each muscle group
 - **Autogenic Relaxation**... the feelings of tension drain away, replaced with feelings of warmth and heaviness by suggestion

More info:
<http://cvh.cvhn.ca/relaxation>
 Elective Education workshops

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Relaxation and the Cardiovascular System

- The relaxation response is physiologically opposite to the stress response
- Research has demonstrated risk benefit for cardiac patients with daily use of relaxation and deep breathing
- Deep breathing alone has been shown to significantly reduce blood pressure

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STRESS RESPONSE

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Stress Response

- Heart Rate
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Relaxation Response



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Additional Relaxation Techniques

- Visualization
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Massage
- Warm bath





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Breathing/Stretching Exercises


- Diaphragmatic Breathing...with pursed lips
- Neck stretch forward
- Shoulder shrugs
- Shoulder circles
- Arm overhead stretch
- Abdominal and buttock squeeze
- Fingers and toes curls

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Healthy Coping For Stress Reduction and Prevention

- Leisure activities
- Spend some time alone each day
- Build and maintain social and community supports
- Nurture personal relationships
- Seek advise/assistance when needed
- Access spirituality



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Self Care Actions

- Develop stress reducing organization skills
- Practice good time management
- Eat healthy foods
- Exercise regularly
- Get adequate sleep
- Learn to manage your anger
- Practice assertive communication
- Develop stress resistant thinking









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Enjoy!





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Questions?

