

WATCH OUT FOR STRESS

Stress! It's something everyone experiences at one time or another. Many people think of stress as something that comes from the outside. But, stress is actually defined as how you respond—physically and behaviorally—to change and to challenging situations. There are both positive and negative aspects to stress. Stress can be experienced as the excitement you feel when you get the job you want or the feeling of tension the creeps up on you when you have an argument with your spouse. Some stress helps you concentrate, focus, and perform. Many people do their best work under pressure. But problems arise when you can't relax after meeting a challenge. When stress becomes a constant way of life, your health and well-being can suffer.

Physical Symptoms and Consequences of Stress

- Insomnia
- Indigestion
- Headache
- High blood pressure
- Compromised immune system

Behavioral Symptoms of Stress

- Isolation from family and friends
- Depression and anxiety
- Irritability and rapid mood swings
- Compulsive eating or dieting
- Drug and alcohol abuse

Learning to Handle Stress

Take control—the best way to manage stress is to develop a sense of control over the important aspects of your life and your responses to challenging situations.

Learn to prioritize—make priorities based on what is fundamentally important to your life at home and work. If you feel too much stress it may be time to review your values and priorities

Learn to communicate—express your concerns and needs to those who may be able to help including your spouse, supervisor, friend, and/or counselor.

Check your expectations—be clear about your expectations of others and let go of unrealistic expectations for yourself.

Allow for change—remember change is inevitable. If you're prepared to accept changes in your plans and adapt to minor setbacks, you'll be better able to roll with the punches.