

* Stress is perceived by the body, as a threat and therefore the body reacts by amping up the protective capabilities
  + The hypothalamus signals the adrenal glands to release the hormones of adrenaline and cortisol
  + Adrenaline increases the heart rate, elevates BP and boosts the supply of energy
  + Cortisol increases glucose in the blood stream, increases the use of glucose by the brain and increases our body’s ability to repair tissues
* “Fight-or-Flight” response is normally self-limiting, however if there is an ever present stressor it is always on
  + Long term effects of overexposure put a person at risk for: anxiety, depression, digestive problems, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain and memory difficulties

Stress Management:

* Eating a healthy diet, regular exercise and plenty of sleep
* Practicing relaxation techniques or learning to meditate
* Fostering healthy friendships
* Having a sense of humor
* Seeking professional counseling when needed

RESOURCES:

American Psychological Association

National Institute of Health

PsychCentral

Mayo Clinic

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”- William James

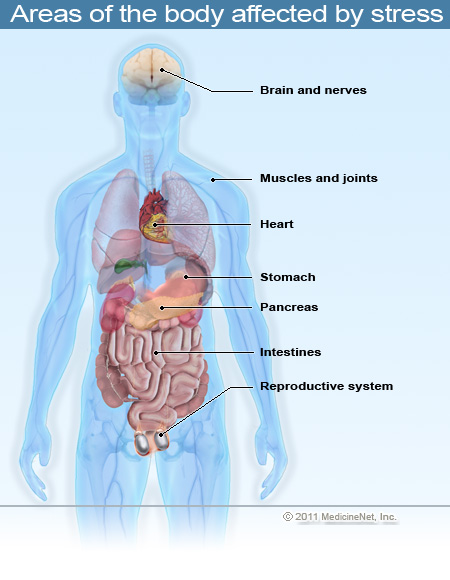
The Link between Poverty and Stress:

* Those in Poverty are more likely to develop diabetes, hypertension, depression, and anxiety
* Children of poverty suffer from difficulty with cognitive function and memory

Chronic Stress and The Body

* Based upon a study down on adult rats, chronic stress causes more myelin-producing cells and fewer neurons
  + This disrupts the normal balance in the brain and causes changes in the communication in the brain
* Patients with stress disorders, such as PTSD, have alterations in their brain connectivity leading to stronger connection between the hippocampus and the amygdala (which controls the fight or flight response
  + The imbalance leads to a stronger response to stress with limited ability to shut down the response
* Chronic Stress affects cognition function due to the change in myelin-producing cells rather than neurons, which causes for difficulty with learning and memory skills.





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Chronic Stress and The Brain

The Effects of Chronic Stress on Health