



NEWSLETTER [VOL.4 | ISSUE 4 | APRIL 2011]

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN APRIL

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Atlantic Medical Funwalk 2011

Cost: \$15/adults; \$12/Children

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

Women's Empowerment Summit 2011

Atlantis, Paradise Island

Cost: \$295/person; \$250/groups 5+

Fee includes access to sessions, lunch and refreshments, gift bag, executive padfolio, tickets to Michael Pintard's "Women Talk", bridge toll and parking passes.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

KPACE Afterschool Program

Run/Walk-a-Thon

Starts from Arawak Cay, 6:00 a.m.

Registration at 5:30 a.m.

Cost: \$25/Adults; \$22/Youth; Group Rates

Contact: Darcy Moss T: 324-7607



AGAVE AND LIME SALMON

- 4 serving-sized pieces of salmon
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 4 scallions, sliced
- 4 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup agave nectar
- Fresh lime juice from two large limes
- Pinch of cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Tear off eight pieces of foil; two for each piece of salmon. Place one serving of salmon on one piece of foil. Season the salmon with a little sea salt and fresh ground pepper.

Combine first 4 ingredients.

For the sauce:

Combine the olive oil, agave, lime juice and touch of cinnamon in a glass measuring cup. Pour the sauce all over the salmon pieces. Sprinkle the salmon with onions, scallions and garlic.

Place the remaining pieces of foil on each serving and fold the edges to create a packet. Bake in a preheated oven for roughly 20 minutes, till it flakes easily but is not dried out.



APRIL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

UNDERSTANDING STRESS: SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, CAUSES, AND EFFECTS

www.helpguide.org

Modern life is full of hassles, deadlines, frustrations, and demands. For many people, stress is so commonplace that it has become a way of life. Stress isn't always bad. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But when you're constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price.

If you frequently find yourself feeling frazzled and overwhelmed, it's time to take action to bring your nervous system back into balance. You can protect yourself by learning how to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way. When you sense danger – whether it's real or imagined – the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the "fight-or-flight" reaction, or the stress response.

The stress response is the body's way of protecting you. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, stress can save your life – giving you extra strength to defend yourself, for example, or spurring you to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident.

The stress response also helps you rise to meet challenges. Stress is what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work, sharpens your concentration when you're attempting the game-winning free throw, or drives you to study for an exam when you'd rather be watching TV.

But beyond a certain point, stress stops being helpful and starts causing major damage to your health, your mood, your productivity, your relationships, and your quality of life.

EFFECTS OF CHRONIC STRESS?

The body doesn't distinguish between physical and psychological threats. When you're stressed over a busy schedule, an argument with a friend, a traffic jam, or a mountain of bills, your body reacts just as strongly as if you were facing a life-or-death

situation. If you have a lot of responsibilities and worries, your emergency stress response may be "on" most of the time. The more your body's stress system is activated, the easier it is to trip and the harder it is to shut off.

Long-term exposure to stress can lead to serious health problems. Chronic stress disrupts nearly every system in your body. It can raise blood pressure, suppress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, contribute to infertility, and speed up the aging process. Long-term stress can even rewire the brain, leaving you more vulnerable to anxiety and depression.

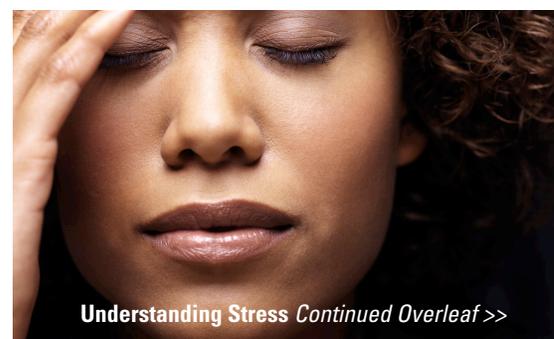
Many health problems are caused or exacerbated by stress, including:

- Pain of any kind
- Heart disease
- Digestive problems
- Sleep problems
- Depression
- Obesity
- Autoimmune diseases
- Skin conditions, such as eczema

HOW MUCH STRESS IS TOO MUCH?

Because of the widespread damage stress can cause, it's important to know your own limit. But just how much stress is "too much" differs from person to person. Some people roll with the punches, while others crumble at the slightest obstacle or frustration. Some people even seem to thrive on the excitement and challenge of a high-stress lifestyle.

Your ability to tolerate stress depends on many factors, including the quality of your relationships, your general outlook on life, your emotional intelligence, and genetics.



Understanding Stress Continued Overleaf >>



STRESS MANAGEMENT DIET

www.webMD.com

Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness. There's evidence that too much pressure is not just a mood killer. People who are under constant stress are more vulnerable to everything from colds to high blood pressure and heart disease. Although there are many ways to cope, one strategy is to eat stress-fighting foods. Read on to learn how a stress management diet can help.

Stress-Busting Foods: How They Work

Foods can fight stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, actually boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can reduce levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. Finally, a nutritious diet can counteract the impact of stress, by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure.

Complex Carbs

All carbs prompt the brain to make more serotonin. For a steady supply of this feel-good chemical, it's best to eat complex carbs, which are digested more slowly. Good choices include whole-grain breakfast cereals, breads, and pastas, as well as old-fashioned oatmeal. Complex carbs can also help you feel balanced by stabilizing blood sugar levels.

Oranges

Oranges make the list for their wealth of vitamin C. Studies suggest this vitamin can reduce levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. If you have a particularly stressful event coming up, you may want to consider supplements.

Spinach

Popeye never lets stress get the best of him – maybe it's all the magnesium in his spinach. Magnesium helps regulate cortisol levels and tends to get depleted when we're under pressure. Too little magnesium may trigger headaches and fatigue, compounding the effects of stress. One cup of spinach goes a long way toward replenishing magnesium stores.

Fatty Fish

To keep cortisol and adrenaline in check, make friends with fatty fish. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish like salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and protect against heart disease. For a steady supply, aim to eat three ounces of fatty fish at least twice a week.

Pistachios

Pistachios can soften the impact stress hormones have on the body. Adrenaline raises blood pressure and gets your heart racing when you're under stress. Eating a handful of pistachios every day can lower blood pressure, so it won't spike as high when that adrenaline rush comes.

Avocados

One of the best ways to reduce high blood pressure is to get enough potassium -- and half an avocado has more potassium than a medium-sized banana. In addition, guacamole offers a nutritious alternative when stress has you craving a high-fat treat.

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UNDERSTANDING STRESS *Continued*

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Things that influence your stress tolerance level:

Your support network – A strong network of supportive friends and family members is an enormous buffer against life's stressors. On the flip side, the more lonely and isolated you are, the greater your vulnerability to stress.

Your sense of control – If you have confidence in yourself and your ability to influence events and persevere through challenges, it's easier to take stress in stride. People who are vulnerable to stress tend to feel like things are out of their control.

Your attitude and outlook – Stress-hardy people have an optimistic attitude. They tend to embrace challenges, have a strong sense of humor, accept that change is a part of life, and believe in a higher power or purpose.

Your ability to deal with your emotions. You're extremely vulnerable to stress if you don't know how to calm and soothe yourself when you're feeling sad, angry, or afraid. The ability to bring your emotions into balance helps you bounce back from adversity.

Your knowledge and preparation – The more you know about a stressful situation, including how long it will last and what to expect, the easier it is to cope. For example, if you go into surgery with a realistic picture of what to expect post-op, a painful recovery will be less traumatic than if you were expecting to bounce back immediately.

CAUSES OF STRESS?

The situations and pressures that cause stress are known as stressors. We usually think of stressors as being negative, such as an exhausting work schedule or a rocky relationship.

However, anything that puts high demands on you or forces you to adjust can be stressful. This includes positive events such as getting married, buying a house, going to college, or receiving a promotion.

What causes stress depends, at least in part, on your perception of it. Something that's stressful to you may not faze someone else; they may even enjoy it.

For example, your morning commute may make you anxious and tense because you worry that traffic will make you late. Others, however, may find the trip relaxing because they allow more than enough time and enjoy listening to music while they drive.

Common External Stressors:

- Major life changes
- Work
- Relationship difficulties
- Financial problems
- Being too busy
- Children and family

Common Internal Stressors:

- Inability to accept uncertainty
- Pessimism
- Negative self-talk
- Unrealistic expectations
- Perfectionism
- Lack of assertiveness

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS OVERLOAD?

It's important to learn how to recognize when your stress levels are out of control. The most dangerous thing about stress is how easily it can creep up on you. You get used to it. It starts to feel familiar – even normal. You don't notice how much it's affecting you, even as it takes a heavy toll.

The signs and symptoms of stress overload can be almost anything. Stress affects the mind, body, and behavior in many ways, and everyone experiences stress differently.

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms:

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

Emotional Symptoms:

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Physical Symptoms:

- Aches and pains
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

Behavioral Symptoms:

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

Keep in mind that the signs and symptoms of stress can also be caused by other psychological and medical problems. If you're experiencing any of the warning signs of stress, it's important to see a doctor for a full evaluation. Your doctor can help you determine whether or not your symptoms are stress-related.

Understanding Stress *Continued Overleaf* >>



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UNDERSTANDING STRESS *Continued*
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DEALING WITH STRESS AND ITS SYMPTOMS?

While unchecked stress is undeniably damaging, there are many things you can do to reduce its impact and cope with symptoms.

Learn how to manage stress:

You may feel like the stress in your life is out of your control, but you can always control the way you respond. Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, your emotions, your schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems. Stress management involves changing the stressful situation when you can, changing your reaction when you can't, taking care of yourself, and making time for rest and relaxation.

Strengthen your relationships:

A strong support network is your greatest protection against stress. When you have trusted friends and family members you know you can count on, life's pressures don't seem as overwhelming. So spend time with the people you love and don't let your responsibilities keep you from having a social life. If you don't have any close relationships, or your relationships are the source of your stress, make it a priority to build stronger and more satisfying connections.

Tips for reaching out & building relationships:

- Help someone else by volunteering
- Have lunch or coffee with a co-worker
- Call or email an old friend
- Go for a walk with a workout buddy
- Schedule a weekly dinner date
- Take a class or join a club

Learn how to relax:

You can't completely eliminate stress from your life, but you can control how much it affects you. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the stress response. When practiced regularly, these activities lead to a reduction in your everyday stress levels and a boost in your feelings of joy and serenity. They also increase your ability to stay calm and collected under pressure.

Invest in your emotional health:

Most people ignore their emotional health until there's a problem. But just as it requires time and energy to build or maintain your physical health, so it is with your emotional well-being. The more you put in to it, the stronger it will be. People with good emotional health have an ability to bounce back from stress and adversity. This ability is called resilience. They remain focused, flexible, and positive in bad times as well as good. The good news is that there are many steps you can take to build your resilience and your overall emotional health.



Conflict is a normal and necessary part of healthy relationships. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything at all times. Therefore, learning how to deal with conflict—rather than avoiding it—is crucial.

When conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people. By learning the skills you need for successful conflict resolution, you can face disagreements with confidence and keep your personal and professional relationships strong and growing.

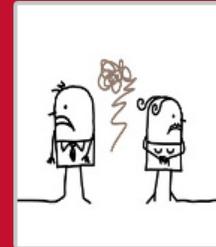
UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS

Conflict arises from differences. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences look trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is at the core of the problem; a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy.

Conflicts arise from differing needs.

Everyone needs to feel understood, nurtured, and supported, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships.

It is important to acknowledge that both parties' needs play important roles in the long-term success of most relationships, and each deserves respect and consideration. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and break-ups. In workplace conflicts, differing needs are often at the heart of bitter disputes. When you can recognize the legitimacy of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of compassionate understanding, it opens pathways to creative problem solving, team building, and improved relationships.



MENTAL HEALTH
CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Building the skills that can turn conflicts into opportunities.
www.helpguide.org

Healthy & unhealthy ways of managing and resolving conflict

Unhealthy response to conflict:

- An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person
- Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions
- The withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment
- An inability to compromise or see the other person's side.
- The fear and avoidance of conflict; the expectation of bad outcomes

Healthy response to conflict:

- The capacity to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person
- Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions
- A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger
- The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing
- A belief that facing conflict head is the best thing for both sides

Successful conflict resolution depends on your ability to regulate stress and your emotions.

This article will be continued in the May edition of "Eye on Health".

Stay tuned to read more!

This and all information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. Family Guardian & BahamaHealth disclaim any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.