



Stress Affects Mind and Body

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress? How does it affect your overall health? And what can you do to manage your stress?

Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand. Any type of challenge—such as performance at work or school, a significant life change, or a traumatic event—can be stressful.

Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you know when to seek help.

Coping with the impact of chronic stress can be challenging. Because the source of long-term stress is more constant than acute stress, the body



never receives a clear signal to return to normal functioning. With chronic stress, those same lifesaving reactions in the body can disturb the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, sleep, and reproductive systems. Some people may experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, sadness, anger, or irritability.

Over time, continued strain on your body from stress may contribute to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses, including mental disorders such as depression (www.nimh.nih.gov/depression) or anxiety (www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders).

Examples of symptoms affecting your mental and physical health include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite or weight changes (or both)
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems

Getting Help

Treatment for mental illnesses usually consists of therapy, medication, or a combination of the two. Treatment can be given in person or through a phone or computer (telehealth).

Legacy Health & Wellness is an important resource, providing initial mental health screenings and referrals to mental health specialists. If you have concerns about your mental health, don't hesitate asking for help.

Seek help right away if you have suicidal thoughts, are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, or are using drugs or alcohol more frequently as a result of stress. Call the confidential, toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Lifeline chat is available at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The service is available to everyone.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health



Flu Vaccinations More Important Than Ever

It's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both spread this fall and winter. Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021 to protect yourself and the people around you from flu, and to help reduce the strain on healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends use of any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine as an option for vaccination this season. These include injectable flu vaccines, or flu shots, live attenuated influenza vaccines, or nasal spray.

Flu vaccine prevents tens of thousands of hospitalizations each year. During 2018-2019 flu vaccination prevented an estimated 58,000 flu-related hospitalizations.

Source: cdc.gov

Flu vaccinations will be available soon at Legacy Health & Wellness. Stay tuned for exact dates.