S.O.S. signs of stress

Stress itself is neither good nor bad. Most people think of stress as negative – physical, emotional, mental strain. Sometimes, stress can be positive too. Stress and its symptoms are common problems.

Stress involves change

Stress involves change. It is a fact of life. Stress is everyday happenings such as caring for children, going to school, dating, and getting along with family, friends and co-workers. Even a good change, such as getting a new job, can cause stress.

Stress is pressure from the outside which makes tension on the inside. Your mind and body go into high gear when you feel stress. Someone may tell you, “You don’t have any big problems – you shouldn’t feel under stress.” But if you feel under stress, you are. Stress – as with any feeling – is personal. Everyone experiences stress in his or her own way.

Not always aware of stress

Strangely, you are not always aware that you are under stress. Sometimes you do not see the habits and signs that can warn you because they are so familiar.

Stress can change the way you think, feel and act. And stress can make you feel bad about yourself. While the effects vary, how you cope with stress can cause problems with your family.

That’s why knowing the S.O.S. – signs of stress – is so important. How you handle stress is vital to your well-being and to the people around you. Recognizing the signs is a real help in learning to cope.

If you need help

Don’t let stress get you down. An optimistic attitude is helpful in getting over rough spots. Understand S.O.S. – signs of stress. Talk over your situation with a friend, family member or clergy.

For help in an emergency, call Genesee Health System at (810) 257-3740, or toll free at (877) 346-3648, where a counselor is available 24 hours a day. For non-emergency services, call the Access Center at (810) 257-3742.

Other Genesee Health System handouts include: The art of stress reduction, Codependency, Stress in the workplace, 10 stress-busters for families and What is good mental health? ©

www.genhs.org

---

How does stress feel to you?

Physical symptoms – such as loss of appetite, overeating, frequent headaches, upset stomach, etc. – are signs of stress. Some feelings can be signs, too. Do you have any of the signs listed below? If so, find out how you can better cope with stress.

Physical

- Increased heartbeat
- Sweaty palms
- Frequent headaches
- Tight neck or back muscles
- Trembling or twitching
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Difficulty sleeping
- Trouble breathing
- Nervous laughter
- Sleeping too much

Emotional

- Angry
- Apathetic
- Bored
- Crying often
- Depressed
- Flustered
- Tired
- Frustrated
- Worried
- Irritable
- Jealous
- Low self-esteem
- Nervous
- Uptight
- Nightmares
- Overworked
- Panic
- Pressure
- Restless
- Tense
- Withdrawn

Mental

- Forgetful
- Decrease/increase of fantasies
- Less productive
- Thinking about the past
- Lack of concentration
- Less creativity

Behavioral

- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Careless driving
- Increased smoking
- Aggressiveness

---

Pub. No. 013 Revised 12/14

420 W. Fifth Avenue • Flint, MI 48503 • www.genhs.org • (810) 257-3705