

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms

Excerpt from HelpGuide's publication, [Understanding Stress: Signs, Symptoms, Causes, and Effects](#)

The following table lists some of the common warning signs and symptoms of stress. Use it to identify the symptoms you typically experience when you're under stress. If you know your red flags, you can take early steps to deal with the stressful situation before it – or your emotions – spiral out of control. You may

also want to see the American Heart Association's [How Does Stress Affect You](#) and/or the Mayo Clinic's [Stress Symptoms: Effects on Your Body, Feelings, and Behavior](#) publications to assess the signs and symptoms that affect you when you are under stress.

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms

Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to concentrate
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying
- Loss of objectivity
- Fearful anticipation

Physical Symptoms

- Headaches or backaches
- Muscle tension and stiffness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Insomnia
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Weight gain or loss
- Skin breakouts (hives, eczema)
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Agitation
- Restlessness
- Short temper
- Irritability, impatience
- Inability to relax
- Feeling tense and "on edge"
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Behavioral Symptoms

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastination, neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting, pacing)
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Overdoing activities (e.g., exercising, shopping)
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Picking fights with others

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.

Source:

HelpGuide (2007). Understanding stress: Signs, symptoms, causes, and effects [on-line]. Retrieved June 19, 2008. From http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm.