

Section 8—Manage Stress To Boost Immunity

It is common knowledge that the risk of common colds, flu, and respiratory illnesses is higher when one is going through a period of mental stress. Mental stress also slows the recovery from diseases such as cancer. Many illnesses have a psychosomatic connection; good examples are:

- Frequent colds, respiratory infections, asthmatic attacks
- Obesity and Type2 diabetes—Mental Stress increases the level of the stress hormone cortisol, which interferes with insulin effect, glucose utilization, and causes unwanted fat storage.
- Headaches and Migraine
- Insomnia- Eighty percent of cases of Insomnia are under the banner of adjustment insomnia, which means the inability to adjust to life situations.
- Cardiovascular diseases—Mental Stress raises the level of excitatory hormones that cause High blood pressure, heart attacks, and irregular heartbeat.
- Gastrointestinal disorders—Mental stress and anxiety lead to high acidity in the stomach, acid reflux, indigestion, constipation, and diarrhea.

How to Know You Suffer from Stress?—Medical evaluation and tests help in diagnosing physical illness, but medical science has no proper methodology to diagnose mental stress. The stress may present in many different ways:

- The feelings of loneliness, sadness, fear, and anxiety
- A feeling of powerlessness—The thoughts in mind that I am the victim, and others are responsible for my unhappiness.
- There is difficulty with relationships due to negative thoughts of anger, jealousy, and hatred.
- Dealing with a situation becomes an impulsive reaction (thoughtless action) rather than a thoughtful action
- Finally, a consistent problem is adjustment insomnia with loss of deep rejuvenating sleep.

Managing Stress

The origin of most stress in humans is rooted in the feeling of fear of loss of three things near and dear to a human- Power/Position/Status, Relationship, and Money. Stress is not an external but an internal problem. Most stress gets built by the way one reacts or behaves towards life situations. Human actions/ reactions, behavior, character, and destiny are under the control of thoughts:

***As are thoughts so are the actions
As are the actions so become the behavior
As is the behavior so becomes the character
As is the character, so becomes the destiny.***

The psychology experts postulate that humans think between 60 to 80,000 thoughts per day. That comes to approximately 2500 thoughts/ hour. Mental stress is nothing but thoughts multiplying at a fast speed, causing restlessness, anxiety, and exhaustion of the mind. Peace and deep sleep disappear from an overactive mind. The fast-running mind dwells typically in the wasted thoughts of regrets of the past and anxieties of the future. If one learns to tame wasted thoughts, the mind becomes calm and quiet. There are simple rules one can adopt to slow the speed of thoughts:

- ***An attitude of gratitude***—It is a powerful tool for calming the mind and building bridges in the relationships. It is a spiritual quality that generates tremendous positive energy.
- ***Being an optimist***—To be an optimist, one has to have faith that providence has a perfect plan, and every failure carries a hidden message of success.
- ***Acceptance***—This attribute humbles an opponent. Resistance and rejection only prolong the struggle generating negative energy and exhaustion.
- ***Solitude***- It is a powerful tool for calming the mind. Few exercises that help build solitude are:

Speak Softly and slowly
Speak only when necessary, and what is necessary
Speak with kindness
Meditation and Yoga Nidra

The Natural Herbal supplements for Mental Stress

Two herbal supplements which may help with calming the mind are:

- A. ***Ashwagandha root*** - It is an Ayurveda herb that works as an anxiolytic and mood stabilizer. It brings down the level of the stress hormone cortisol.
- B. ***Hemp seeds and Oil***—Hemp seeds come from Cannabis plants but do not contain the psychoactive, addictive components THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol).