



## Stress: Information and Advice



### Stress

Stress is an external force that we all encounter. It is an individual's response to definable external problems, life changes or 'stressors'. The most common stressor is the constant demand of interruptions that affect our ability to carry out the usual routines of everyday life – impossibly high expectations from employers, partners and families, or demands from the bank. Stress can have a profound effect on our day-to-day lives, so it is important to understand and recognise it before it becomes disruptive.

A little stress is good for the body and alerts the mind, but as repeated and increased stress begins to take its toll physically, emotionally and behaviourally, a variety of symptoms can result:

### Physical

Appetite change (too much or too little), indigestion, nausea, constipation, diarrhoea, sleep disturbance, sweating, breathlessness, fainting, muscle twitches/spasms, headaches, nail biting. Stress can also act as a trigger and maintain medical or psychiatric problems such as peptic ulceration, musculoskeletal problems, high blood pressure, psoriasis, asthma, eczema, irritable bowel syndrome and depression.

### Psychological

Fears develop, loss of trust, dread the future or certain situations, avoidance, feel neglected, feel there is no one to confide in, inability to show true feelings, sense of losing control, depressed, feel anxious.

### Behavioural

Difficulty in concentrating, making decisions or meeting deadlines, aggressive, irritable, impatient, frequent crying, feeling low in mood, lack of interest in life, loss of libido, impotency or frigidity, denial of a problem. People might turn to cigarettes, alcohol or tranquillizers as a way of coping with stress. These may seem to help in the short-term, but in the longer term may further undermine wellbeing and will not contribute to developing a positive approach to stress.

### Acute stress reaction symptoms

Initial state of 'daze', followed by either further withdrawal or by agitation, over-activity and signs of panic anxiety (fast heartbeat, sweating). Symptoms usually appear within minutes and disappear within hours or days.

### Treatment

You may recognise that you are under stress without a professional diagnosis, but seeking professional help is important and can help to alleviate and off-load worries when managing the problems caused by stress.

*The Royal College of Psychiatrists*  
[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall.aspx)



### Treatment at Catio Nightingale Hospital

Catio Nightingale Hospital has a range of consultant psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors and therapists as well as a variety of enhanced treatments available that can provide useful insights into the causes of one's stress, and equip individuals to cope with the onset of stress symptoms. Therapy may be one-to-one on an outpatient basis or as part of a group programme on a day care basis.

For more information on our services, funding options and how to access treatment please request a brochure or call our Admissions Team on 0800 783 0594 (24hr), email [info@nightingalehospital.co.uk](mailto:info@nightingalehospital.co.uk) or visit our website [www.nightingalehospital.co.uk](http://www.nightingalehospital.co.uk)



**Catio Nightingale**  
Hospital

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Central London's leading independent mental health hospital

**Enquiries and referrals: 0800 783 0594 (24 hours)**

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