Physical and Mental Signs of Stress

Stress is so common and often a regular part of people’s lives that they don’t always realize when they are suffering from stress. There are both mental and physical signs of stress that you should be aware of.

**Physical Changes**

Your body can tell you a lot based on your ailments, and not just due to having a physical condition. It might also be telling you that you are too stressed out and that needs to be addressed. For example, if you notice that you can’t sleep well, you have more or less of an appetite than you used to, or you have been losing or gaining weight, those are physical signs of stress. You may also have skin changes like adult acne, intestinal problems, irregular menstrual cycles, or sexual dysfunction.

**Emotional Signs**

Your emotional state is very closely related to your level of stress, and is often what someone notices first when they are wondering if they have too much stress. You might feel overwhelmed and like you don’t have full control over your life, or you could have extremely low self-esteem and depression. If you find that you can’t emotionally handle others, you can’t quiet your mind’s racing thoughts, or you keep getting agitated with others, that might also be from a heightened stress level.

**Behavioral Changes**

You should also pay close attention to your behavior and how it might be changing from day to day. You may find that you are suddenly using substances to cover up the negative emotions or overwhelming mental state, such as smoking cigarettes, drinking more heavily, or experimenting with drugs. Lashing out at others, becoming angry, or procrastinating a lot could also be signs of stress. You may also be fidgeting or biting your nails, which are often associated with being stressed out.

**Cognitive and Mental Symptoms**

Cognitive signs are related to your mental state, which are sometimes confused with emotional symptoms, but can also be related to them. For example, if you suddenly have poor judgment and are making bad decisions at work or in your personal life, that might be related to your cognitive function. You could have racing thoughts, constant worrying and anxiety, or not being able to focus much on tasks. Stress can also cause poor memory and sudden disorganization where it wasn’t a problem previously in your life.

These are just some of the many signs of stress you may be exhibiting. If you are thinking or feeling anything strange, it is worth asking your doctor about.