



Stress is a normal feeling, however if stress lasts a long time or overwhelms your ability to cope, it can have a negative impact on your health, wellbeing, relationships, work and general enjoyment of life.

This tip sheet can assist with understanding and managing your stress.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is an emotional, psychological and physical response where changes occur in your body and mind - the body and mind thinks that it is under attack and prepares to take action or escape from the situation. This is known as the “fight” or “flight” response, and our bodies respond by activating the nervous system and releasing hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol to help respond to the stressful situation.

HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT US?

Stress is helpful when it increases our ability to be alert, energised, switched on and resourceful in facing challenges we enjoy or have to deal with. But stress becomes unhelpful when it leaves us feeling fatigued, tense, anxious, burnt out, feeling yourself overwhelmed and withdrawing from others. Each of us will experience stress differently and the tipping point between helpful and unhelpful stress will vary greatly and is also affected by what is happening in our lives as a whole.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF STRESS?

If the response to the stressful situation is ongoing it can cause other physical and psychological symptoms, these symptoms can include:

 **Headaches, other aches and pains**

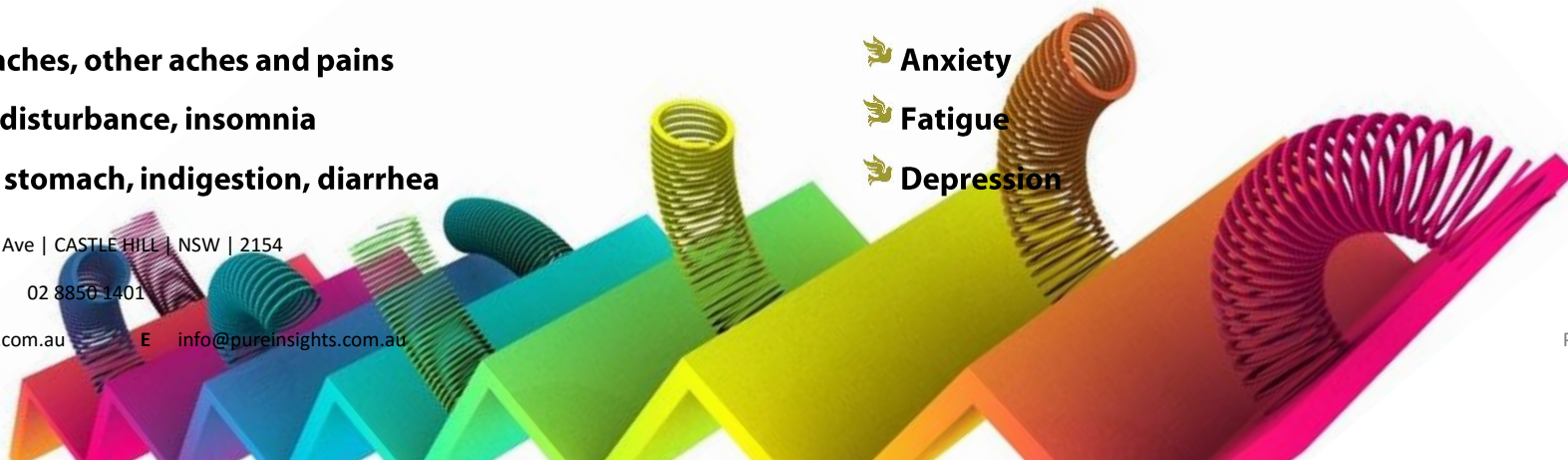
 **Sleep disturbance, insomnia**

 **Upset stomach, indigestion, diarrhea**

 **Anxiety**

 **Fatigue**

 **Depression**





- 👉 Feeling overwhelmed
- 👉 Feeling moody, tearful
- 👉 Difficulty concentrating
- 👉 Low self-esteem, lack of confidence

- 👉 High Blood Pressure
- 👉 Weakened immune system
- 👉 Heart Disease
- 👉 Anger, irritability

MANAGING EVERYDAY STRESS

Learning how to manage everyday stress in healthy way is very important. The following can help you in looking after your mind and body wellbeing, reduce your stress and the impact on your health.

- 👉 Identify early warning signs of stress in your body, this could include but is not limited to grinding your teeth, getting headaches, feeling irritable or short tempered.
- 👉 Identify triggers that raise your stress levels, this could include but is not limited to - late nights, deadlines, hunger, then you can apply your strategies to manage the stress.
- 👉 Establish routines, for instance regular meal times, can be calming in helping you manage your stress.
- 👉 Spend time with people who care about you, this is an important way you can manage ongoing stress time in your life, and talking about how you are feeling.
- 👉 Look after your health, involves healthy eating and regular exercise.
- 👉 Notice your self talk, when you are stressed you may find you are saying things in your head over and over and this will be adding to the stress, this might include "I can't cope".
- 👉 Practice relaxing, this will help your mind and your body to readjust, this might include gardening, identifying something you look forward to, it doesn't have to just be meditation and muscle relaxation techniques.
- 👉 Seek professional support with confidential consultation (your family doctor or EAP provider).