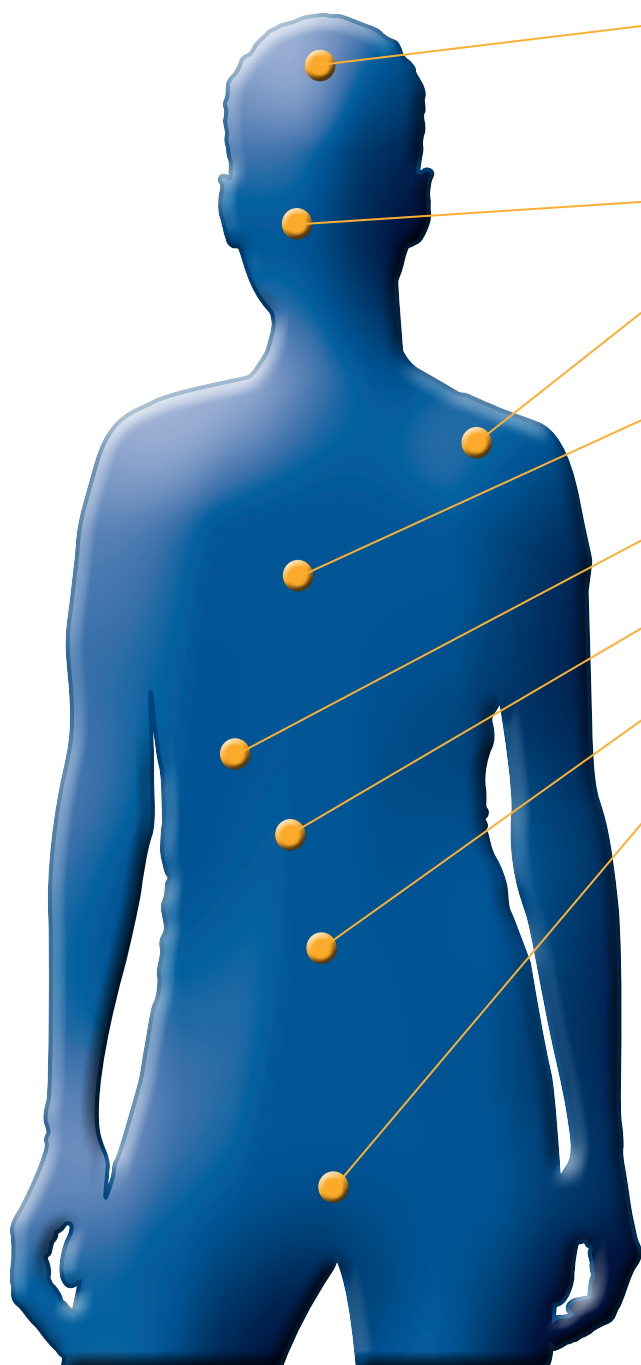


LIVE WELL! it's essential for your potential

Knowing the Signs of Stress - It's Essential for Your Potential

We all go through stressful times. In small doses, stress may be good for you when it gives you a burst of energy. But too much stress or stress that lasts for a long time can take its toll on your body.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by stress, you're not alone. In fact, a survey of Americans found that one-third of people are living with extreme stress. Get in tune to how you're feeling and learn about the effects of stress on your whole body.



BRAIN AND NERVES

Headaches, feelings of despair, lack of energy, sadness, nervousness, anger, irritability, increased or decreased eating, trouble concentrating, memory problems, trouble sleeping, mental health problems (such as panic attacks, anxiety disorders and depression)

SKIN

Acne and other skin problems

MUSCLES AND JOINTS

Muscle aches and tension (especially in the neck, shoulders and back), increased risk of reduced bone density

HEART

Faster heartbeat, rise in blood pressure, increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack

STOMACH

Nausea, stomach pain, heartburn, weight gain

PANCREAS

Increased risk of diabetes

INTESTINES

Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive problems

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

For women – irregular or more painful periods, reduced sexual desire
For men – impotence, lower sperm production, reduced sexual desire

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Lowered ability to fight or recover from illness



Are you experiencing signs of stress?

- Feeling angry, irritable or easily frustrated
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Change in eating habits
- Problems concentrating
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Trouble sleeping
- Problems with memory
- Feeling burned out from work
- Feeling that you can't overcome difficulties in your life
- Having trouble functioning in your job or personal life

If you're having any of these symptoms, it's important that you take care of yourself. There are healthy steps you can take to stay well when you're stressed, like connecting to people close to you, getting enough sleep or being physically active. Visit www.LiveYourLifeWell.org for more information.

If you feel overwhelmed, unable to cope and feel as though your stress is affecting how you function every day, it could be something more, like depression or anxiety. Don't let it go unchecked. Contact your health care provider.

For more information on this topic or referrals to local services, visit our online Frequently Asked Questions section at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/faqs, contact Mental Health America or your local Mental Health America affiliate.

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center or dial 911 for immediate assistance.

