

# Understanding stress

**Stress is a natural part of life. It is how your body reacts to things that disrupt your usual life.**

What causes stress is different for each of us. For example, being in a traffic jam or worrying about a deadline at work or a sick spouse may cause you stress.

In small doses, stress may be good for you. It can give you a burst of energy to help you get things done, like focus on a test or give a presentation at work. But stress that lasts a long time can affect your emotional or physical health. It is important to work with your healthcare provider to help you understand and manage stress.

## Common symptoms

- Anxiety
- Chest pain, rapid heart beat
- Colds more often than usual
- Concentration problems
- Dry mouth
- Fatigue
- Headaches, muscle tension, neck or back pain
- Irritability, short temper
- Jitters
- Loss of appetite or overeating comfort foods
- Memory problems
- Sleeping problems
- Upset stomach

We all react differently to stress. Learn to recognize your stress symptoms. Don't ignore common symptoms of stress. They may be early warning signs that you need to manage your stress better

***Talk with your healthcare provider about how to help manage the stress in your life.***