



# IN GOOD HEALTH NEWSLETTER...April



*Valerie Smith, MS, ACM JIF Wellness Director*

## Volume 2 - Issue 4

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**April:**  
**Stress Awareness Month**  
**National Humor Month**

# STRESS!

## What is Stress?

- Stress is an arousal of the mind and the body in response to demands made upon them.
- External stressors can include: physical, environmental, daily hassles, social, and organizational.
- Internal stressors can include: mind traps, perceptions, self critical and judgemental thoughts.
- Regardless of the stressor, the body has the same response called “fight or flight”.
- During this response, many different reactions occur in your body to defend against these demands.
- When we allow our bodies to get revved up, but don’t allow the stress to dissipate, health problems can occur.

## Types of Stress

- **Eustress (The Good):** excitement, stimulation, creativity, success, achievement, increased productivity
- **Distress (The Bad):** boredom, frustration, pressure, poor performance, decreased productivity, headaches, indigestion, colds, unhappy and disharmonious relationships, ulcers, heart attacks, cancer, anxiety, depression, and nervous breakdowns.

## Nature of Stress Triggers

- **External Stressors** are events and situations that happen to you. While you may have control over some of these stressors and how much you let them affect you, there are times when they extend beyond your control.
- **Internal Stressors** are feelings and thoughts that pop into your head and cause you unrest. Focusing on internal triggers is important for stress management because these are all controllable. Our thoughts, emotions, self-talk, and worry become constant and perpetual. Most stress is a direct result of these automatic thoughts.

**WARNING SIGNS** - When you are not sure of the exact cause of your stress, it may help to know the warning signs of stress. Once you can identify these signs, you can learn how your body responds

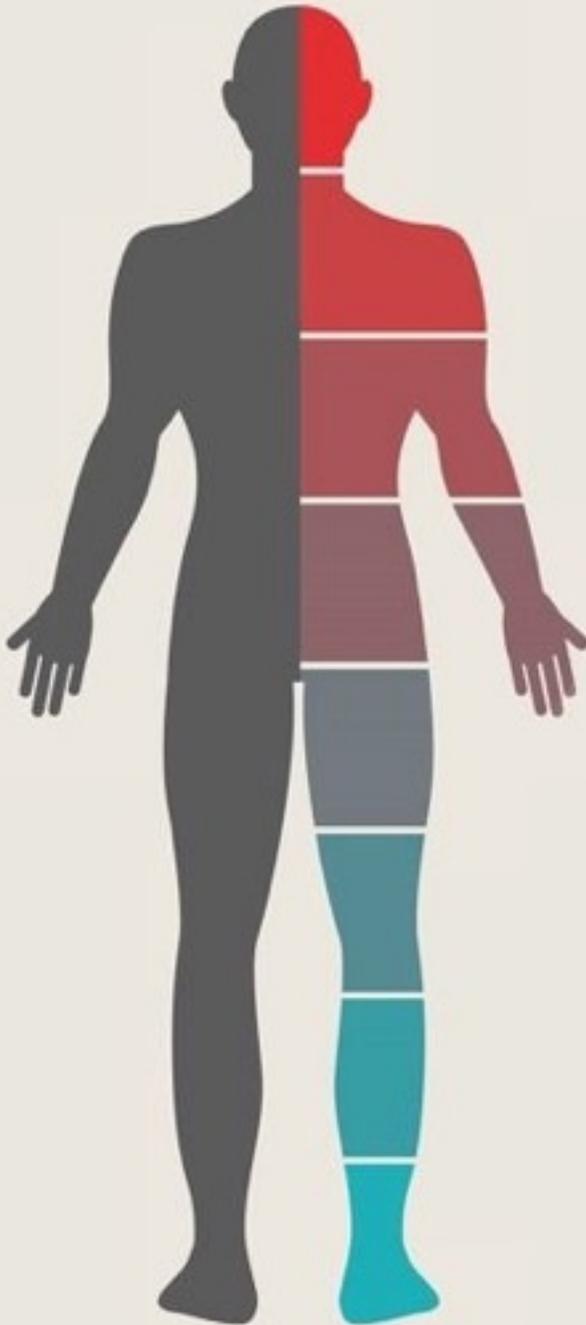


[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)

VALERIE SMITH, MS WELLNESS DIRECTOR  
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811

# The Effects of Stress on The Body



Mood issues including anger, depression, irritability. Lack of energy, concentration problems, sleeping issues, headaches. Mental issues including anxiety disorders and panic attacks.



Increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, higher cholesterol and risk of heart attack



In the immune system, there is reduced ability to fight and recover from illness



Stomach cramps, reflux, and nausea



Loss of libido, lower sperm production for men, and increased period pain for women



Aches and pains in the joint and muscles



Lower bone density

 **Holistic Dentistry.ie**  
Natural & Safe Dentistry, Bray, Co. Wicklow

# Mindful Stress Management

## Did You Know?

Up to 60% of all absences are attributed to stress and stress - related headaches are the leading cause of lost work time, followed by low back pain and hypertension. ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), [nlm.nih.gov](http://nlm.nih.gov))

## The Body's Response

**The more our minds start to become anxious or fearful, the more fear arises as an emotion - the more the body will react.**

- Stored sugars and fats are released into the bloodstream to provide quick energy
- The heart pumps faster to provide more blood to muscles
- Breathing rate increases to provide oxygen to muscles
- Perspiration increases to help reduce body temperature
- Blood clotting mechanisms are activated to protect against injury
- Muscles tense in preparation for action

**These symptoms can happen for hours at a time without being aware of it. Over time, these demands can take a toll on your overall health and well-being.**

**We are all built with an automatic response to stress. It is important to know your personal stress symptoms so you can then identify when they are occurring, and help you to determine your stressor. From there, you can determine how you will respond to the stressor.**

## Putting It Into Action



## Awareness

Notice the physical changes taking place in your body and the thoughts you are having. This can allow you to recognize how **YOU** respond to stress. Everyone has different symptoms. Identify your body's physical, mental, and emotional responses to stressful events.

Ask yourself:

- Are my muscles tense?
- Is my jaw clenched?
- How am I responding to the situation?
- Am I reacting out of habit?
- What am I thinking?

This allows us to practice the common aspect of mindfulness which is breaking the chain of reacting on auto-pilot.

## Breathe

By breathing deeply, we decrease the cortisol that is released in the body and we increase the parasympathetic nervous system, or the system that calms us.

## Choose and Change

Ask yourself:

- Can I control this?
- How will I take action?
- How important is this?
- What are the facts? What am I thinking?
- Is this a battle I am willing to fight?
- Will this matter in 5 days? 5 Months? 5 years?

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VALERIE SMITH, MS WELLNESS DIRECTOR  
[ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM) 609-251-7811

# STress Control



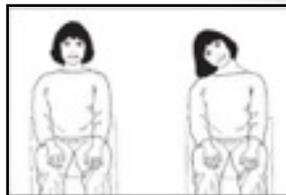
1. Rest. Rest. Rest some more.
2. Get plenty of sleep each night
3. Divide big tasks into smaller, more manageable ones.
4. Accept that you can't control every situation and learn to be flexible.
5. Laugh! Look for humor in life and take time to have fun.
6. Think positively and surround yourself by others who think the same.
7. Make time for relaxation. Try listening to soothing music, gardening, playing with a pet, reading a good book, or doing whatever helps you relax.
8. Eat a well balanced diet, full of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Limit sugar.
9. Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. They only make matters worse.
10. Remember, it's okay to cry.
11. Learn to say "NO"
13. Confide in at least one friend, and share your dissapoinments, as well as achievements, with him or her. Talk things out so minor frustrations don't build up.
14. Use mistakes and setbacks as opportunities to learn.
15. Prolonged sitting contributes to stress, so add activity to your daily routine by doing such simple things as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, standing or walking while on the telephone, etc.

## Anti-Stress Stretches



### Finger Fan:

Extend your arms straight in front of you with palms up. Spread your fingers as far apart as possible. Hold 5 seconds



### Ear to Shoulder:

Lower your right ear to your right shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side.



### Upper Back Stretch:

Sit up straight with your fingers interlaced behind your head. Keeping your shoulders down, lift your chest and bring your elbows back as far as you can. Hold



### Overhead Stretch:

Raise your arms over head and interlace your fingers with palms facing up. Keeping your shoulders down stretch upwards. Hold for 20 seconds.



### Knee Pull:

While seated, bring one knee up toward your chest as high as possible. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat for other knee.



### Waist Bend:

Reach arms over head with fingers laced together. Facing forward with shoulders down, bend to one side from the waist. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat to other side.



# Humor

A guy has a talking dog. He brings it to a talent scout. "This dog can speak English," he claims to the unimpressed agent. "Okay, Sport," the guy says to the dog, "what's on the top of a house?" "Roof!" the dog replies. "Oh, come on..." the talent agent responds. "All dogs go 'roof'." "No, wait," the guy says. He asks the dog "what does sandpaper feel like?" "Rough!" the dog answers. The talent agent gives a condescending blank stare. He is losing his patience. "No, hang on," the guy says. "This one will amaze you." He turns and asks the dog: "Who, in your opinion, was the greatest baseball player of all time?" "Ruth!" goes the dog. And the talent scout, having seen enough, boots them out of his office onto the street. And the dog turns to the guy and says "Maybe I shoulda said DiMaggio?"

## Laughter is good for your health

- **Laughter relaxes the whole body.** A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.
- **Laughter boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.
- **Laughter triggers the release of endorphins,** the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
- **Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

Researchers have found that 10 - 15 minutes of laughter per day causes you to burn an extra 10 - 40 calories each time. Now that is reason to smile.



## Mental Health Benefits

- Adds joy and zest to life
- Eases anxiety and fear
- Relieves stress
- Improves mood
- Enhances resilience

## Social Benefits

- Strengthens relationships
- Attracts others to us
- Enhances teamwork
- Helps defuse conflict
- Promotes group bonding

## Unusual Ways to Celebrate Humor Month With Your Co-Workers

1. Ask employees to bring in baby photos or yearbook photos, post to bulletin board and guess who is who.
2. The traveling bouquet. Bring in a bouquet of flowers and present to a co-worker. Tell them to keep on their desk for an hour and then pass on to another co-worker to do the same.
3. Take some joke breaks during the day.
4. Bring in sparkling apple juice and take time to toast each other, your successes and failures.
5. Offer on site massages.

[humormonth.com](http://humormonth.com)

[nature.com](http://nature.com)

[helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org)

VALERIE SMITH, MS WELLNESS DIRECTOR  
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811

# Tuscan Style Tuna Salad

**Makes:** 4 servings, 1 cup each

**Active Time:** 10 minutes

**Total Time:** 10 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

2 6-ounce cans chunk light tuna,  
drained (see Note)  
1 15-ounce can small white beans,  
such as cannellini or great northern,  
rinsed (see Ingredient note)  
10 cherry tomatoes, quartered  
4 scallions, trimmed and sliced  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper, to taste



## PREPARATION

- 1 Combine tuna, beans, tomatoes, scallions, oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Stir gently. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

## TIPS & NOTES

**Make Ahead Tip:** Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

**Note:** Chunk light tuna, which comes from the smaller skipjack or yellowfin, has less mercury than canned white albacore tuna. The FDA/EPA advises that women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children consume no more than 6 ounces of albacore a week; up to 12 ounces of canned light tuna is considered safe.

**Ingredient Note:** When you use canned beans in a recipe, be sure to rinse them first in a colander under cold running water, as their canning liquid often contains a fair amount of sodium.

## NUTRITION

**Per serving:** 253 calories; 8 g fat (1 g sat, 5 g mono); 53 mg cholesterol; 20 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 31 g protein; 6 g fiber; 453 mg sodium; 451 mg potassium.

**Nutrition Bonus:** Fiber (25% daily value), Vitamin C (20% dv).

**Carbohydrate Servings:** 1

**Exchanges:** 1 starch, 1 vegetable, 3 1/2 very lean meat, 1 fat

[eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)

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