

# What **stress** does to your body



## **Body**

- Blood vessels become narrow, increasing blood pressure.
- Management of endocrine diseases, such as diabetes, is more difficult.
- Inflammation increases in the body. Inflammation is good when it helps to fight infections and heal wounds. However, excessive inflammation brought about by stress, will damage tissue and shorten a healthy life.

## **Mind**

- Difficulty focusing and thinking clearly
- Increased risk of depression
- Memory difficulties
- Increased perception of pain

## **Heart**

- Cholesterol accumulates more rapidly in the heart, narrowing blood vessels and decreasing the flow of oxygen to the heart.
- Risk of blood vessels in the heart becoming blocked increases, resulting in a heart attack.

## **Immune system**

- Diseases caused by the immune system attacking the body get worse, examples include:
  - Multiple sclerosis
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
  - Psoriasis
- Resistance to infectious disease and healing of skin wounds decrease.
- Latent infections, such as herpes, may become active.

## **Gastro-intestinal tract**

- Crohn's disease
- Increased risk of ulcers
- Ulcerative colitis

Sources: Bruce S. Rabin, University of Pittsburgh

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