

Balance your mind and body

Your thoughts could make you feel better.

Sleepless nights, headaches, loss of appetite and indigestion may all be signs of stress. Today many people live fast-paced lifestyles and are exposed to conflict at home, work and in their relationships. Unfortunately, stress does affect everyone at some point in their life.

What is stress?

Stress is caused by worrying, fear, living a hectic lifestyle and having low self-esteem. During times of loss, such as a death or divorce, you may be more prone to stress. The more stressed you are, the weaker your body is likely to be, leaving you vulnerable to hypertension (high

blood pressure), headaches, tiredness, ulcers and other illnesses. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with stress and Dr Safwaan Desai from Qualsa says that if you are feeling low, you need to take the time to really listen to your body. He shares a few tips on how to beat the blues and live a healthy, positive life.

TAKE THIS QUICK QUIZ TO TEST YOUR STRESS LEVEL:

- * Do you feel tired all the time?
- * Do you suffer from headaches, ulcers or indigestion?
- * Do you find it difficult to relax and fall asleep?
- * Have you lost interest in hobbies and other activities which you enjoyed?
- * Do you feel angry, irritable or "down in the dumps"?

If you've answered yes to more than three of the questions, you may suffer from stress.

Dos and Don'ts of stress

Don't:

- * Cope with stress by using addictive substances like cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.

Do:

- * Think positive thoughts: focus on your good qualities and don't compare yourself to others.
- * Laugh often. Your heart rate goes up, blood circulation to the brain and body improves and muscles become more relaxed.
- * Slow down: Manage your time between work, family and friends.
- * Allow 15-30 minutes for yourself every day to read, take a relaxing bath or use the time for prayer.
- * Say no. Don't promise to do things if you don't have the time.
- * Do lead a healthy lifestyle: eat healthy foods like fresh fruit and vegetables.
- * Get active! Even gardening and housework counts. Sporting activity keeps you connected to your community.
- * Try to get at least 6-8 hours sleep every night.
- * Chat to a friend, elder or family member.

METROPOLITAN
HEALTH GROUP 

 Q U A L S A

WHERE TO GET HELP

Anxiety and Depression Helpline
0800 567 567

SA Federation for Mental Health
011 781 1852

Mental Health Information Centre
021 938 9229