

# Indicators and Symptoms of Stress

## Indicators and symptoms of stress

The following is designed for you to recognise any potential indicators or symptoms of stress. However, they are not confined to such problems and therefore you should apply caution in their interpretation. OH is available to offer help and advice as required:

### Psychological signs:

- inability to concentrate or make simple decisions;
- becoming more vague or having memory lapses;
- easily distracted;
- less intuitive and creative;
- undue worrying;
- negative thinking;
- depression and anxiety;
- prone to accidents;
- insomnia or waking tired;

### Emotional signs:

- tearful;
- irritable;
- mood swings;
- extra sensitive to criticism;
- defensive;
- feeling out of control;
- lack of motivation;
- angry;
- frustrated;
- lack of confidence and/or self-esteem;

### Physical signs:

- aches, pains and muscle tension / grinding teeth;
- frequent colds / infections;
- allergies / rashes / skin irritations;
- constipation / diarrhoea / IBS;
- weight loss / gain;
- indigestions / heartburn / ulcers;
- hyperventilation / lump in the throat / pins and needles;
- dizziness / palpitations;
- panic attacks / nausea;
- physical tiredness;
- menstrual changes / loss of libido / sexual problems;
- heart problems / high blood pressure;

## Behavioural signs:

- not making time for relaxation / personal activities;
- increased reliance on alcohol, smoking, caffeine, recreational or illegal drugs;
- becoming a workaholic;
- poor time management and / or poor standards of work;
- absenteeism;
- self-neglect / change in appearance;
- social withdrawal;
- relationship problems;
- recklessness;
- aggressive / anger outbursts;
- nervousness;
- uncharacteristically lying.

These will often accumulate until you are forced to take notice of them. Don't rationalise them away, if you are not sure, always consult your GP. It is often the behavioural symptoms that are noticed, as they are more obvious, but by this time stress has been going on for many months, maybe even a year or more.