

## Battle or run

Stress, stress, and more stress!!!

There are three main types of stress that may occur in our everyday lives: sudden, repeated sudden, and chronic (or continuing) stress. Many of us may experience a combination of these.

Our bodies react to all types of stress the same, **regardless of if the stress arises from a real or perceived event**. Both sudden and chronic stressors cause the 'fight or flight' response.

Hormones are released that cause several things to happen: blood and oxygen pumps quickly to our cells, heart rate increases, breathing increases, blood flows to our big muscles, digestion stops, sex hormones decrease and fighting hormones increase and there is increased mental alertness.

In prehistoric times, this rapid response was needed to quickly escape a dangerous situation or fight off a predator. Today we usually do not fight off predators, so these hormones and changes linger and create unhealthy stress patterns in our nervous system. All stress can trigger this response.

Imagine that you see a bear charging at you:

- A small region at the base of the brain sets off the stress response. The nervous system triggers the body into action. The nervous system regulates blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, hormones blood flow to create the stress response.
- Adrenaline is released which increases heart rate and increases blood pressure, so more blood circulates to the muscles and heart to support a boost of energy. More oxygen is available to the heart, lungs, and brain to accommodate faster breathing and heightened alertness. Vision and hearing may become sharpened.
- If stress continues, the stress glands release another hormone called cortisol, which stimulates the release of glucose into the blood and increases the brain's use of glucose for energy. It also turns off certain systems not vital to the fight. These systems include digestion, reproduction, and growth because who needs to digest food, procreate, or make new cells while fighting off a bear?

- These hormones do not return to normal levels until the stress passes. If the stress does not pass, the nervous system continues to trigger physical reactions that can eventually lead to inflammation and damage to cells.

With acute stress, the event is brief and hormone levels will gradually return to normal.

Repeated sudden as well as chronic stress trigger the fight-or-flight response over and over causing a persistent elevation of hormones, *leading to a very high risk of health problems:*

- Digestive issues (heartburn, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation)
- Weight gain
- Elevated blood pressure
- Chest pain, heart disease
- Immune system problems
- Skin conditions
- Muscular pain (headaches, back pain, neck pain)
- Sleep disruption, insomnia
- Infertility
- Brain fog, dementia
- Anxiety, depression

Chronic stress raises the body's metabolic needs and increases the use and excretion of many nutrients. If one does not eat a nutritious diet, a deficiency may occur. Stress also creates a chain reaction that can negatively affect eating habits, leading to other health problems down the road.

So, what can you do?

First, find out what stress pattern your brain may be stuck in. We have equipment called the Neuroinfiniti® which measures brain waves and body reactions to stress. It tells us if you respond properly to, and more importantly, if you recover from stress. Based on your brain and nervous system pattern, we create a tailor-made program to get you back to a healthy stress response.

Call today for your Stress Response Evaluation assessment!