



# What Is Stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to any threatening or dangerous situation that requires a change or response. Stress can come from your environment, inside your body, and from your thoughts. Stress is a normal part of everyday life. Stress can be positive or negative.<sup>[1]</sup>



## Stressors

Stressors are any activity, event, or situation that causes stress. They can be internal (coming from inside the body) or external (coming from outside the body).<sup>[2]</sup>

### Internal



#### Pain

Ouch! Pain is a sense; it's the body's way of signaling that something's wrong. Pain can be physical or emotional.



#### Disease

Things like the common cold, COVID-19, a broken bone, an ear infection or other injuries put stress on the body by disrupting normal body processes.



#### Lack of Sleep

Zzzz... Sleep is one of the most important things your body needs to stay healthy. When you're not getting enough sleep, or constantly being awoken throughout the night, it puts stress on both your brain and your body.



#### Negative Thoughts

Having low self-esteem or a poor self-image is harmful to both your physical and emotional health. Negative thoughts put stress on both your mind and your body.



### External



#### Social Pressure

Every society has its own unique culture with its own unique rules for what is considered acceptable behavior. Even small communities and groups of people exert these pressures. If a person's beliefs or actions are different than the culture they are living in, it can cause stress.



#### School

School places lots of demands on students of all ages. Pressure to perform well, complete work, and to fit in socially with their peers can be stressful to some students.



#### Life Changes

Big life changes, even positive ones like getting married, having a baby or getting a sibling, buying a new home, or getting a new step-parent can each be stressful. Challenging life changes like the death of a friend or family member, getting a divorce, or the loss of a job can be especially stressful.



#### Work





## Diet

Not getting enough to eat or not eating a healthy and balanced diet puts stress on your body and your brain. If this happens for a long time, it can have severe negative effects on your health.



## Harmful Substances

Activities like smoking, drinking alcohol, and using drugs all introduce harmful substances into your body. The compounds found in these substances put stress on your body and negatively affect both your mental and physical health.



A person's job managing deadlines, the amount of work to be done, and meeting the demands of a boss can be stressful. Some work environments like those of firemen, policemen, or soldiers can also be stressful because of the dangerous environments they work in.



## Relationships

It takes both mental and physical energy to grow and maintain relationships with the people in your life. Whether it be friends, family members, or romantic partners, when relationships aren't going well, it can put a lot of stress on everyone involved.



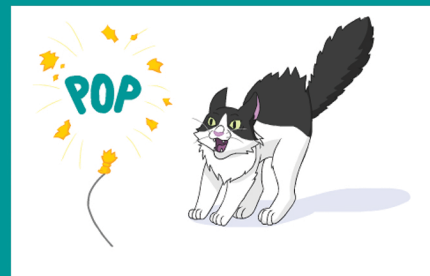
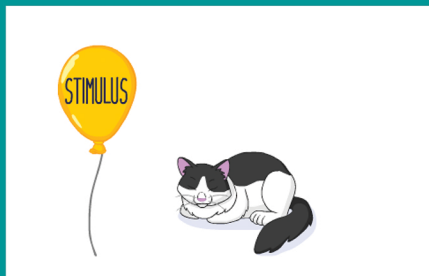
## Money

Many people all over the world worry about having enough money to pay for basic needs like food, housing, and healthcare. Money is often one of the most common stressors in people's lives.



# Stress Response

**Stressors trigger the body's stress responses. The brain gets information from the senses and decides if the situation is stressful. The stress response causes many rapid changes, like increasing your heart and breathing rates, getting you ready for fight or flight. Short-term it's protective.**<sup>[3]</sup>



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1. Adapted from: Stress: Signs, Symptoms, Management & Prevention. (2015, February 5). Retrieved from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11874-stress>
2. Adapted from: Stressor definition and meaning: Collins English Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/stressor>
3. Adapted from: Harvard Health Publishing. (2011, May 1). Understanding the stress response. Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understanding-the-stress-response>