

# Patience may be good for your overall health

Halifax Courier · 25 Apr 2024 · 18 · by Dr Keith Souter

There are many people who cannot abide waiting. They get fidgety in shopping queues, they decide not to wait and stomp off. Or when in a traffic queue they do a U-turn and dash off to find a way of beating the rest of the queue. In a word, they are impatient.

Impatience seems to be a double-edged sword. On the one side it implies that the person tends to think fast. They are more likely to make impulsive decisions. On the other side, they may be more prone to develop anger and hostility issues.

Psychologists have looked at this to see whether it is possible to predict whether a person was impatient or not by looking at their eye movements. In one published study researchers conducted a series of experiments on volunteers and found that there was indeed a strong correlation between eye movement speed and patience or impulsivity.

People who made rapid eye movements tend to be less willing to wait. They are liable to work out alternate ways of getting out of a situation rather than simply waiting. They tend to regard their time as more valuable than other people's. Their decisions, however, can often be risky, especially on the road.

The downside of impatience is that it may not be good for you. Other research conducted on young adults showed that people who are impatient tend to experience more hostility issues. That can affect them physically, because they tend to operate with higher levels of stress hormones. These stimulate platelets in the blood to make them stickier and more likely to produce blood clots.

Not only that, but these hormones can cause the body's fat cells to release fat into the bloodstream. This fat can slowly be accumulated inside artery walls as plaques. That could eventually cause heart trouble and high blood pressure.

If you can strive to be a laid back, patient person, you may help your long-term health. You might start by getting into the habit of asking yourself whether those extra minutes really matter.