DEALING WITH STRESS IS NOT-SO STRESSFREE

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CBeing stressed out can result in hair loss alled the 'silent killer', stress is the body's natural reaction to a difficult situation. With April being regarded as Stress Awareness Month, Dr Astik Joshi, Forensic Psychiatrist, New Delhi, says, "Stress is caused by outside stimuli like work pressure, exams or personal problems, and inner thoughts." But, when the body's short-term reaction becomes chronic and excessive, it can have adverse and even fatal results.



WAYS STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BODY ON THE INSIDE

Stress brings about biological and psychological alterations like tension, heightened heart rate, or anxiety, as the body prep to cope with the threat. "Stress can take a toll on your mental health, leaving you with feelings of anxiety and irritation, mess with your sleep, and make it hard to focus or remember," shares Dr Kersi Chavda, Consultant, Psychiatrist at P.D. Hinduja Hospital & MRC, Khar, Mumbai. "You may notice yourself feeling exhausted, unmotivated or emotionally drained. Over time, constant stress can lead to burnout and make it harder to deal with everyday challenges."

Cortisol, aka the stress hormone, can disrupt normal bodily functions and affect blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar levels. These conditions strain the cardiovascular system, increase inflammation, and weaken the immune response, making you more prone to infections.

HOW DOES STRESS MANIFEST OUTSIDE THE BODY?

When you are stressed out, there are many signs that can be seen on the exterior, shares Dr Suchismitha Rajamanya, Lead Consultant & HOD Internal Medicine, Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru. You may develop skin issues like chronic acne, rashes and even stress-induced hormonal changes like hair loss. Stress can affect your posture; people feel tension in their neck and shoulder area, and usually clench their jaw.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MANAGING STRESS

No one can avoid stress, shares Dr Kersi, but there are ways to keep it from controlling your life. Stay active as exercise clears your mind and it releases neurotransmitters that seem to boost one's mood. Sleep matters because when you're well-rested things don't feel as overwhelming. Take regular breaks to recharge and try to step away from something if it is stressing you out.

"When your digestion is imbalanced, it can trigger the body's stress response," says Irina Sharma, Modern Mayr Medicine Practitioner, who suggests chewing mindfully and eating in sync with your circadian rhythm — light meals in the evening and no raw foods after 4pm to ease the digestive load on your gut. Sleeping naked can help the body regulate its temperature efficiently. It also encourages deeper rest and reduces cortisol levels.