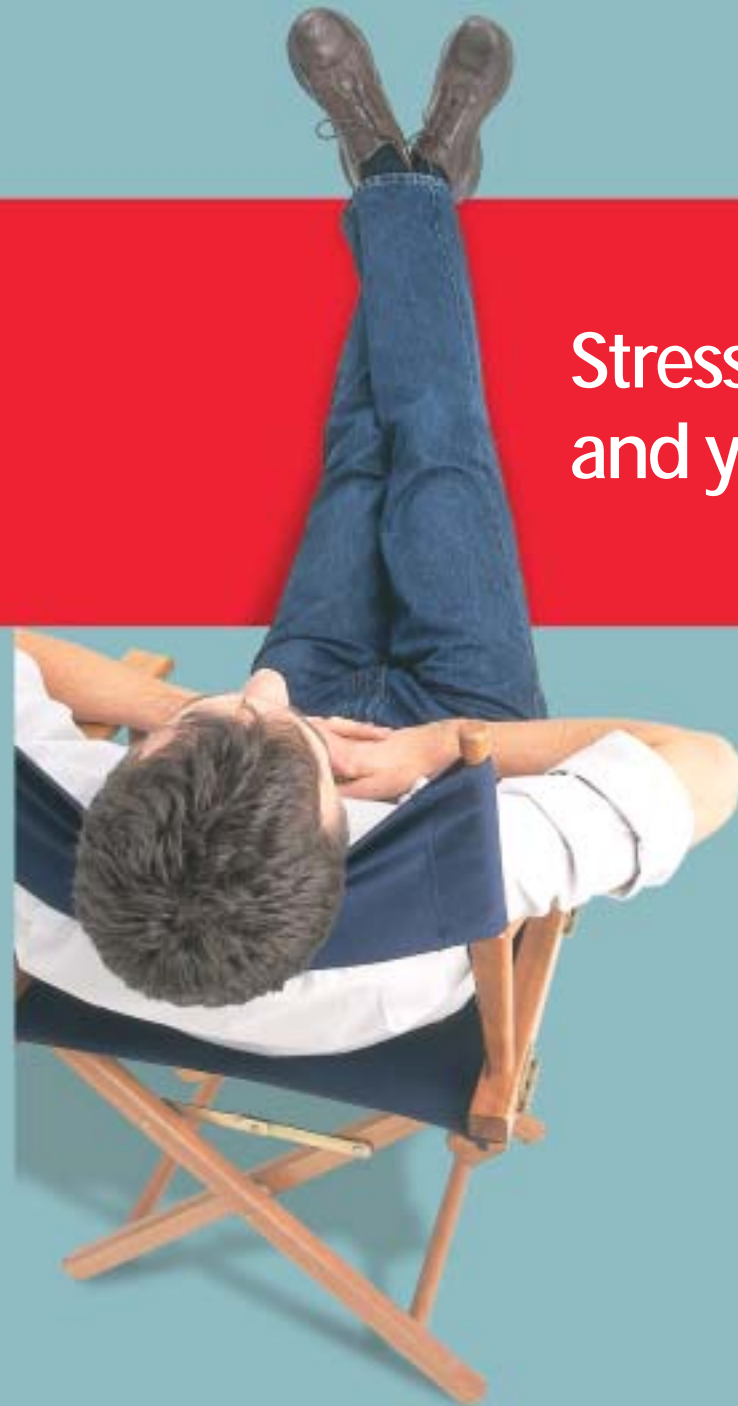


British Heart Foundation  
14 Fitzhardinge Street  
London W1H 6DH  
T • 020 7935 0185  
W • [bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)

Heart Information Line • 08450 70 80 70  
a local rate number

# Stress and your heart



As a leading provider of Group Risk policies for employers, Legal & General is pleased to support this booklet. For information on Group Risk at Legal & General, please call 01737 376 140 or email [group.risk@LandG.com](mailto:group.risk@LandG.com)

### Acknowledgements

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'The stress chain' diagram on page 19 is adapted from *Stress management – volume 1*, by YMCA Fitness Industry Training.

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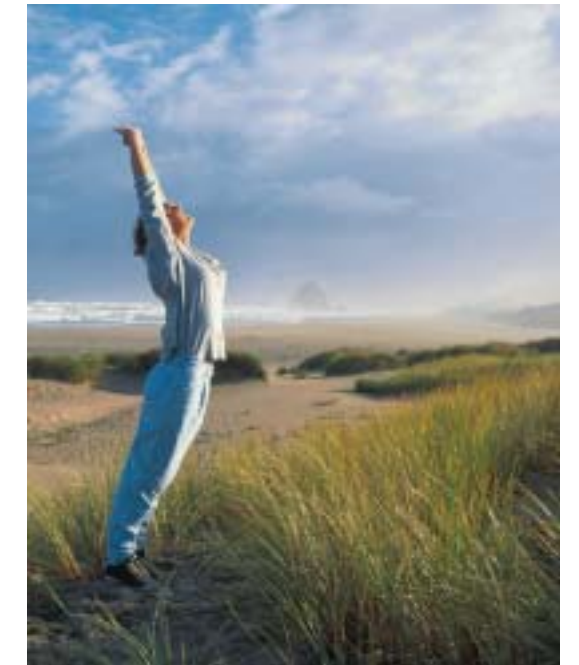
## Introduction

Coronary heart disease can affect people of all ages and backgrounds, in all kinds of situations. Stress is not one of the *main* risk factors for coronary heart disease, but the link between stress and coronary heart disease is becoming clearer as more research is done.

We know that the body reacts to stress by releasing hormones, such as adrenaline, which prepare the heart and body to respond to a challenge. This is known as a 'fight or flight' response. A useful way to think about it is to compare it with the way that animals respond if they are in a dangerous situation. They will either stay and fight or will run away. The body tries to help us in stressful situations by releasing fats and sugars into the blood to provide us with extra energy to respond to challenges. Unfortunately, stress can also have unwanted physical and emotional effects and make us feel 'drained' or unwell.

This booklet looks at:

- how stress can affect your heart and your health
- how to recognise when you are feeling stressed
- how to cope with stress, and
- where to go for more information.



## What is stress?

Stress is a word we hear a lot. It is sometimes used to describe the very fast pace of life that many people lead, or the way we feel when pressure is intense. We all find different things stressful and can experience different signs and symptoms as a result of feeling stressed.

Stress generally occurs when we feel unable to cope with high demands that are placed on us. For example, you might have a workload that you can usually cope with very well but, if you are feeling unwell or are under emotional pressure at home, it can become too much.

It is difficult to measure stress, but we all have some experience of what it is like and how we cope with stressful situations. Some people, for example, may find that they eat more when they are stressed, while others may eat less. People also have different ways of coping with stress. Some may need to relax quietly, while others find that they need to do some exercise to get the stress 'out of their system'. So, the way that we perceive and recognise stress, both in ourselves and those around us, is very important.



A degree of stress is necessary for us to feel motivated and enthusiastic. But too much stress can cause ill health – for example, if too many new or challenging things happen at once, or if the challenges go on for too long. Getting the balance right helps us to lead a healthy, active lifestyle and cope with stress in a positive way.

## How does stress affect the heart?

There are several 'risk factors' for coronary heart disease. (A risk factor is something which increases your likelihood of getting the disease.) The main risk factors for coronary heart disease are:

- smoking
- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol
- not being active enough
- being overweight or obese (very overweight)
- diabetes
- having a family history of coronary heart disease.

However, research evidence is beginning to recognise that, for some people at least, stress may contribute towards coronary heart disease.

Evidence is growing, but it could be a number of years before we can say for certain whether stress *directly* affects the heart. (In contrast, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels are known to have a direct effect on the heart.) We cannot measure stress easily, and this makes this area of research quite complex.

What we know so far is:

- Stress can affect the heart by releasing certain hormones that increase blood pressure and can encourage clotting in the arteries. Stress can increase the production of cortisol and adrenaline – chemicals which prepare the body to react to a new challenge. Research is being carried out to understand more about what happens when the body releases these chemicals, how this can lead to fatty deposits building up in the arteries, and how it can make the blood more likely to clot and increase blood pressure.
- Stress can affect your attitude or state of mind and make you rely on 'short-term fixes', rather than taking long-term action to deal with the stress. For example, stress can encourage less healthy behaviours such as over-eating, drinking too much alcohol, smoking, or taking other drugs.
- Stress can also discourage you from spending time on healthy behaviours such as relaxation or physical activity.

So, it is important to identify the things that cause you stress, and recognise when they might be affecting your health.



## Does work stress cause coronary heart disease?

Research carried out by the Health and Safety Executive has shown that half a million people in Great Britain believe that work-related stress is making them ill.

There is evidence that stress at work can contribute to coronary heart disease in some people. However, it is not the biggest risk factor.

A large research study of civil servants in England has suggested that certain types of work situation can be stressful. It found that people are more

likely to feel stressed when they feel they have little control over their work, but have a lot of demands placed on them. Other research studies have shown that people in manual jobs are particularly likely to be in stressful work situations.

It is not always possible to change the nature of our jobs, but we can take steps to manage stress both at work and at home. It is important to remember that stress is not the *only* cause of coronary heart disease. Stress *combined with* other risk factors for coronary heart disease – such as smoking, lack of physical activity, high blood cholesterol, and a family history of coronary heart disease – all act together to lead to ill health and coronary heart disease.

## How do I know if I am stressed?

We all experience 'stress' in different ways. What one person feels is stressful may not be stressful for another. For some people, giving a talk to or acting in front of a large crowd of people could be 'stressful'; but for others it could provide a lot of enjoyment, and a sense of achievement. Also, for each individual there is 'good stress' as well as 'bad stress' – for example, being under time pressure at work could drive you on to getting your work done very quickly and well. However, some experiences – such as being ill in hospital, or suffering a relationship breakdown – are stressful for most of us.

If you are suffering from the 'bad' effects of being under stress, you may notice some of the following signs and symptoms:

- feeling sweaty or shivery
- pounding heart or palpitations
- needing to go to the toilet a lot more than normal
- feeling sick in the stomach ('having butterflies')
- dry mouth
- exhaustion
- odd aches and pains
- smoking or drinking more
- working to exhaustion
- headaches
- no time for hobbies any more
- being irritable at everything
- thinking "I can't cope with this any more."
- loss of appetite for food, fun or sex
- eating too much or too little
- loss of sense of humour
- loss of interest in personal appearance
- loss of interest in other people
- a feeling that everything is pointless
- tearfulness
- forgetfulness
- feeling tired and having no energy
- difficulty in sleeping, disturbed sleep and waking up unusually early.

If you ticked more than 5 boxes, you may already be suffering from stress and should read on to find out how to manage your stress.

If you ticked fewer than 5 boxes, you may not be suffering adversely from stress at the moment, but read on to learn how to avoid suffering from stress in the future.



# What kinds of things are stressful to me?

You are unlikely to go through life without any stress. It will help you to cope if you can see exactly which areas of your life make you feel stressed. And it can be reassuring to know that there are some areas that are not causing you any stress. Use the list below to identify your own 'triggers' for stress.

One way of identifying your sources of stress is to keep a diary and try to work out why your stress levels feel higher on some days than others.

Once you have identified the sources of your stress, you can then think about how you can deal with them.

## Relationships

Relationships – with your partner, children, parents, friends, neighbours or work colleagues – do not always run smoothly, and can be the cause of considerable stress. Also, if you are having problems in one area of your life, it can put a strain on your relationships with everyone else.

## Work

Work may be a cause of stress, or it may be the place where your symptoms of stress come out. Signs and symptoms of stress at work can include:

- poor work performance
- wishing you could avoid work
- feeling tired, or taking lots of sick leave, or
- lack of concentration.

Your employer may be able to help control some sources of stress and help you take steps to manage your working day. Or you may be able to get some support through informal channels – for example, talking to a sympathetic colleague or friend about workplace stress.



## Health

If you have had a diagnosis of ill health, or if you are coping with the illness of a friend or relative, this can be very stressful. Your GP or practice nurse may be able to put you in contact with a local support group or counselling service. Organisations such as the British Heart Foundation and other medical charities can provide information on certain health conditions. They can also help you to become more involved with your own care, and that of your relatives.

## Major events

Any major event can be stressful – for example, moving house, having a baby, children leaving home, elderly parents moving in, changing job, divorce or bereavement. Our reaction to the event will depend on how long it lasts and how much support we have. Sometimes several life events can happen at once and this can 'tip the balance' from being moderately stressed to feeling unable to cope.

## Finance

Debt and difficulty paying bills are a significant source of stress for many people. It is important to get advice on controlling debt early on, before problems become overwhelming. For help and advice, contact the National Debt Line on **0808 808 4000**.



If every area of your life seems difficult, you may be depressed. If you are constantly stressed, or never manage to resolve your stress, this can lead to depression, which may need medical treatment. (For more on depression, see page 11.)

Whichever area is causing you stress, you can do a lot to help yourself by talking it through with your family or friends. They may be able to 'stand back' from a situation and help you to identify your sources of stress. If you don't have anyone you can talk to, you may find it helpful to speak to a counsellor. (For information on how to find a qualified counsellor, see page 22.)

## Is stress bad for me if I have had a heart attack?

All illnesses are stressful. If you have had a heart attack you are likely to feel frightened and anxious. You may find yourself worrying about:

- if you will be able to return to work
- if you will be able to support your family
- if you can cope on your own
- what you can do to prevent having another heart attack
- if you can resume a sexual relationship with your partner, or
- whether you will be able to do the activities you enjoyed before your heart attack.

Your cardiac rehabilitation nurse or your GP can give you advice and reassurance on all of these points. Hopefully they can help make your return to life outside the hospital as stress-free as possible. You can also call the British Heart Foundation's confidential Heart Information Line on **0845 0 70 80 70** if you need to discuss any of these questions.

For some people who have underlying coronary heart disease (people who have angina, or who have had a heart attack), extreme stress can trigger an angina attack or, very rarely, a heart attack. However, it is not true that *any* amount of stress can cause another heart attack. This mistaken belief may make your partner want to wrap you in 'cotton wool' – for example stopping you from doing any form of exercise or activity. It is important to remember that some stress in



life is positive, particularly if it allows you to do activities that you find rewarding. You may find that boredom is as stressful as having too much to do! You will be the best judge of what kind of activities are too stressful for you, but talk to your GP or practice nurse about any concerns you have.

## How do I know if I am depressed?

Depression may be caused by a number of things: long-term stress, personal factors such as family problems, or a traumatic or unexpected event such as a heart attack. Stress and depression can be linked, but stress does not always result in depression, and stress is not the only cause of depression.

Some of the symptoms of depression may be similar to the signs and symptoms of stress listed on page 7. However, if you have any of the following signs or symptoms, you should seek medical help:

- significant or unexplained weight loss
- slower speech or action than normal
- life seeming unbearable
- crying or feeling tearful on a regular basis
- changes in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or waking too early)
- thinking about committing suicide, or fighting a constant temptation to do it.



Any form of depression is a potentially serious health problem and should not be ignored. Anyone who is so depressed that they are thinking of harming themselves should seek help as quickly as possible.

Your doctor may prescribe medication, or refer you to a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist. Sometimes both medication and counselling are needed.

If you don't want to speak to a doctor, you can phone the Samaritans on **08457 909090** or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

# What can I do about my stress?

Most of us try to lead a healthy life. However, sometimes it is difficult to keep up a healthy lifestyle if you are stressed. For example, it can be difficult to motivate yourself to exercise, or to cook a healthy meal, if you feel your energy has been run down after a stressful day at work. You could find that you fall into a 'cycle' of behaviour where you might exercise less, see less of your friends, and eat quick, ready-prepared meals because you are feeling lethargic or pressed for time. All this could increase your stress levels and feelings of not being able to cope.

It is important to 'break the cycle' and find ways of managing your stress. There are two main ways to tackle your stress:

- Try to tackle the source of your stress.
- Change how you respond to stressful situations.



## Tackling the source of your stress

Once you have identified the aspects of your life that are causing you stress (see pages 8 & 9), think about how you could tackle each *source* of stress.

- If possible, have a break from the source of the stress.
- If possible, tackle the cause of the stress so that it becomes less stressful. For example, if you have trouble managing your workload, you could talk to your manager and maybe arrange to go on a time management course. Or, if you find that you are rushing around all the time, think carefully about your priorities. What really matters to you? Can you work out what your priorities are, and drop the less important things? If you are having family difficulties, perhaps you could think about having counselling, or arrange to spend more time with your family or friends doing activities that you all enjoy.

## Changing how you respond to stressful situations

If you can't change a source of stress, try to focus on changing your attitude towards it. Spend a few minutes thinking about how you respond when you're in a stressful situation. Think about both your physical and your mental response.

### Physical response

What is your physical response when you are feeling stressed? Perhaps you feel tense... or start taking short, fast breaths... or feel butterflies in your stomach? Instead of this, the next time you are feeling stressed, stop and take some slow, deep breaths, or try some relaxation techniques. For example, if you are feeling stressed because you are delayed on your way to work, practise deep breathing exercises to help you to relax. Remind yourself that you can't make the train come on time or make the roadworks disappear by becoming stressed or angry, and that feeling angry or tense won't do anything to help you.

### Mental response

What sort of mental response do you have to stressful situations? Some people feel angry, or depressed. Do you have negative thoughts going through your head when you're feeling stressed –



thoughts like "I can't cope," or "I'm useless"?

Try challenging those thoughts and replacing them with more useful, positive thoughts. For example, instead of thinking "I can't cope", say to yourself "I know I'll be able to cope better if I spend more time looking after myself. And look at all the things I am coping with already." Or, instead of thinking "I'm useless", say to yourself "OK, I can't do this particular thing, but I am good at..."

You can also use coping techniques to reduce the effects of stress on your body. We talk about how to do this in the next section.

# Coping with stress

You may find that making changes to your lifestyle helps to reduce the effects of stress on your body.

## Action points

- take more exercise
- eat well, and drink plenty of water
- cut down on drinking alcohol, smoking and drugs
- make more time for rest and relaxation
- seek help or information – for example about time management, stress management, or assertiveness training
- get support. Talk to friends, workmates or family. Or find out about joining a support group or having counselling
- learn to say 'No' when you feel over-burdened.

We give more information about each of these points on pages 15-18.

Changing your lifestyle in this way can make you feel physically fitter and better able to cope with some of the demands on you – and more able to cope with stressful situations. However you experience stress, coping well with stressful situations can help you feel in control of life and good about yourself.

If the stress seems to be outside your control, see page 22 for information on who to contact for help and advice.



## A healthy lifestyle

A balanced diet and 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on at least 5 days a week will help you to cope with stress. It will also give you:

- more energy and stamina
- more confidence and a positive self-image
- a stronger, toned body
- a lower risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

Stress can make you feel like you don't want to do things, but try to make the effort. Even a brisk half-hour walk every day can make a difference to how you feel, look and cope with life.

## Eat well, and drink plenty of water

People under stress often feel the need for high-calorie snacks and sweets. Coupled with a lack of activity, this can lead to weight gain and tiredness. Instead, try the following:

- eat regular meals
- have at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- make sure that at least one-third of your food comes from bread, pasta, beans, rice, potatoes or pulses
- cut down on salt and sugar
- have less coffee, tea and other drinks with caffeine; and drink plenty of water.

## Case study

Soon after Karen started a new job, her father died from a heart attack. She already had these two big, life-changing events to cope with, and then fell down the stairs and fractured her ankle, ending up with her leg in plaster for eight weeks. When Karen returned to work she found she was enjoying being back and that she was happier, but she was still under a lot of stress which was affecting her physically. She had painful muscular tension in her neck, shoulders and back.

Karen did two things to help reduce her stress levels. First, she contacted her Human Resources Department to ask for a work station assessment to see if anything could be done to help relieve her physical symptoms. They gave her advice on how to change her working environment. Secondly, she took up exercise. Karen found that swimming and pilates helped relieve her stress and that they lifted her mood when she was feeling stressed or 'down'. Exercise made Karen feel really positive and energetic. She also tries to book a holiday or a short break away so that she has something to look forward to during the year.





### Case study

Carolyn has two small children and finds it hard to 'juggle' her time between work and home. She is finding things stressful at work. She finds it helps to take a step back and get things into perspective by thinking about the things outside work that matter to her, and by looking forward to activities that she has planned for the weekend. She also finds it helpful to plan something that is easily achievable and do some small, easy tasks that she can get out of the way. Carolyn has also found self-help books on managing her time useful.



### Don't smoke!

Smoking is not a good short-term prop for stressful situations. If you have already tried to quit smoking and started again, ask your doctor or pharmacist about the stop smoking aids now available. **Nicotine replacement products** help to wean you off nicotine by replacing the very high concentrations of nicotine you get from smoking by delivering lower doses more slowly. If you smoke mainly in response to stress, the gum, lozenges, microtabs, nasal spray or inhalator might be a good choice for you. Or ask your doctor about **bupropion** – a non-nicotine treatment, available on NHS prescription. Bupropion works in the brain to help break the addiction to nicotine. Both nicotine replacement products and bupropion can reduce the cravings for cigarettes and the withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting.

### Keep your alcohol intake within the healthy limits

- no more than 21 units a week for men
- no more than 14 units a week for women
- have at least two alcohol-free days each week

All the following drinks contain about **1 unit of alcohol**:

- 1 pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider
- 1 small glass of wine
- 1 single pub measure of spirits
- 1 small glass of sherry
- 1 single measure of an apéritif.

### Make more time for rest and relaxation

We all need relaxation and we all choose to do different things. Each day should include a relaxing activity – for example listening to music, walking the dog or spending time with friends. Make a list of things that help you to relax, and schedule one in every day. For some people relaxation classes can be helpful.

### Time management

If you need help with managing your time, or you find that you never get done all the things you need to do, you may find a book or a course on time management helpful.

### Stress management

Advice on stress management may involve relaxation training, or learning how to handle different sources of stress and to manage attitudes and behaviours that increase stress. For details of local courses, contact the International Stress Management Association (see page 23).

### Assertiveness training

If you find that you have too much to do because you can't say 'No', you may benefit from assertiveness training.

### Case study

Shahnaz has recently been under a lot of stress, after separating from her husband and moving into a new home. She has found that talking to someone about her situation has really helped, and has taken comfort in her friends' advice and support. Talking about her problems has helped her to calm down and carry on. Knowing that other people have managed to get through stressful situations helps.

### Case study

Nick has a job that involves regularly driving to and from different parts of the country. He realised that he was finding this very stressful as he often got caught in traffic and arrived late. This meant that he was arriving in a bad mood. He decided to take action by writing out a route plan before setting out on each trip, giving himself an extra half hour each time to allow for traffic, and having contact phone numbers to hand to call if he is running late. He also keeps some music CDs to help him relax if he gets stuck in traffic. He has learned to practise some deep breathing exercises to reduce tension, and he reminds himself that nobody will suffer as a consequence of him being late. Arriving on time is not a 'life or death' situation.



### Support from friends

Sharing problems with friends and family can help you to cope with difficult situations. If you are feeling isolated, you may want to widen your circle of friends by joining an evening class, working with a voluntary organisation, or taking up a new hobby.

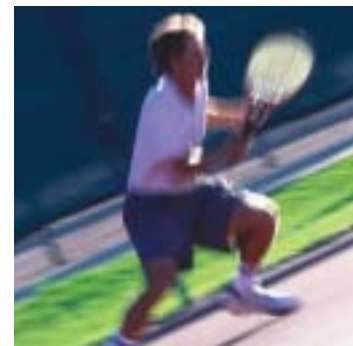


### Support from a counsellor

Some people find it helps to talk to a counsellor. Counselling is never an admission of weakness – it is about making a positive choice to look after yourself. If you don't think that counselling is right for you, then think about other sources of support that could be helpful.

### A support group

If you find yourself in a particular situation – for example if you are recently divorced, or if a relative has been diagnosed with a serious health problem – there may be specific local support group that you can join. A support group gives you the chance to talk to other people who are going through a similar experience. You can share your feelings and coping strategies with each other.



### Case study

Milo found that he was feeling tired all the time and had difficulty sleeping. He had visited his GP who ruled out any other reason for his tiredness and insomnia. His GP asked him to consider making changes to his lifestyle. Milo decided that he was going to make an effort to leave work on time at least twice a week and to use the extra time to play tennis with his neighbour. He looked at his diet and realised that he was often skipping meals or eating high-fat, convenience foods. He decided to make an effort to have lunch each day, even when he was really busy, and to eat more fruit and vegetables. After making these changes, Milo found that that he had more energy and felt more positive and better able to cope with stressful situations.

### The stress chain

This shows you just one example of a strategy for coping with stress.



# Questions and answers about stress

**Q** Is stress good or bad for you?

**A** The ideal amount of stress makes you feel motivated, energetic and flexible enough to change up or down a gear when necessary. However, too much stress can have a negative effect on your health and wellbeing.



**Q** What's the best cure for stress?

**A** First try to find out what is causing the stress (see page 12). Try to reduce the source of stress if you can. Even if you can't change the situation, you can talk to someone about it. You can also find ways to deal with stressful situations – for example, using techniques such as relaxation to reduce your stress levels (see page 13).



**Q** What's wrong with having a drink or two when you're feeling stressed?

**A** Alcohol can make you feel happy and trouble-free. Unfortunately, alcohol is addictive and can have depressant effects which may increase feelings of stress. It can also cause real damage to the body. One or two drinks may seem like a good idea, but after a while one or two may not be enough to drown your sorrows, and your drinking may spiral out of control.



**Q** Isn't stress just due to personal weakness?

**A** Stress can affect all sorts of people – world leaders, super-fit athletes, the clergy, anyone. It is nothing to do with a lack of 'character' or strength. In fact, people who drive themselves hard and try to 'tough out' any situation cause themselves and those around them the most stress.

**Q** Is it true that, if you have coronary heart disease, you must avoid any stress?

**A** Many people think that coronary heart disease is caused by years of stress or worry or overwork. In fact, coronary heart disease results from a build-up of fatty deposits within the walls of the coronary arteries. You are more at risk of coronary heart disease if you smoke, have a high cholesterol level or high blood pressure, if you are inactive or overweight, or if you have diabetes or a family history of coronary heart disease – or if you have a combination of these. Although stress may not be the major cause of heart problems, it is still important



that people with coronary heart disease learn how to deal with and manage stress. Living with coronary heart disease is easier if you eat healthily, take moderate physical exercise and enjoy the company of your family and friends. Doing these things should help to reduce your stress levels.

# Do I need to go for professional help?

It would be worth going for professional help if...

- the information in this booklet is not enough
- you are regularly affected by some of the symptoms of stress
- stress is affecting your ability to work, cope with your life, or your relationships with others
- you think you might have depression (see page 11)
- you have any inclination to harm yourself
- you are using addictive substances or behaviours to cope with stress
- you are facing bullying, violence, or sexual abuse at home or at work
- your friends or partner ask you to.



## How to find professional help

There are many sources of professional help:

- **The National Health Service.** Ask your GP. Or call NHS Direct on **0845 4647**.
- **Private practitioners.** To find a qualified counsellor, psychotherapist or psychologist, contact one of the organisations below, or ask at your local library.

### British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

BACP House  
35-37 Albert Street  
Rugby CV21 2SG  
Tel: **01788 550 899**  
Website: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

### British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies

19 The Globe Centre  
St James Square  
Accrington BB5 0RE  
Tel: **01254 875277**  
Website: [www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com)

### British Psychological Society

48 Princess Road East  
Leicester LE1 7DR  
Tel: **0116 254 9568**  
Website: [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

# For more information

## Stress management

### International Stress Management Association

PO Box 348  
Waltham Cross EN8 8ZL  
Tel: **07000 780430**  
Website: [www.isma.org.uk](http://www.isma.org.uk)  
A voluntary association that sets standards for trainers and promotes knowledge about stress management.

## Stress at work

There is a website on stress in the workplace at [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)

## Alcohol

### Al-Anon Family Groups

Tel: **0207 403 0888**

### Alcohol Concern

Tel: **0207 928 7377**  
Website: [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

### Alcoholics Anonymous

Tel: **01904 644026**  
Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

## Bereavement

### CRUSE Bereavement Care

Cruse House  
126 Sheen Road  
Richmond  
Surrey TW9 1UR  
Tel: **020 8940 4818**  
Website: [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

## Bullying

**Bullying: a survival guide** is a BBC booklet that deals with all aspects of bullying at school, home and work as well as in the army, sports and among elderly people. Price £2.50 per copy. Send a cheque or postal order, payable to 'BBC Education', to: Bullying: A Survival Guide, PO Box 7, London W12 8UD.

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)

For information about how to tackle bullying at school.

## Carers

### Carers Line

Tel: **0808 808 7777**  
A freephone helpline providing advice to carers about their legal rights and entitlements.

See also *How the British Heart Foundation can help*, on page 27.

## Depression

### Depression Alliance

35 Westminster Bridge Road  
London SE1 7JB  
Tel: **0207 633 0557**  
Website: [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

### Mental Health Foundation

20/21 Cornwall Terrace  
London NW1 4QL  
Tel: **020 7535 7400**  
Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

### MIND

15-19 Broadway  
London E15 4BQ  
Tel: **020 8519 2122**  
Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### National Phobics Society

Tel: 0870 7700456

Website:

[www.phobics-society.org.uk](http://www.phobics-society.org.uk)

A helpline for people affected by anxiety, phobias, compulsive disorders or panic attacks.

### NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 4647

Website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

A 24-hour nurse advice and health information service in England and Wales.

### The Samaritans

Tel: 08457 909090

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

A freephone helpline for anyone who wants to talk anonymously to someone who will be supportive and non-judgemental.

### Saneline

Tel: 08457 67 80 00

Website: [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

A helpline offering information and advice on all aspects of mental health for the individual, families or friends.

### Financial problems

#### National Debt Line

Tel: 0808 808 4000

Website:

[www.nationaldebtline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.org.uk)

### Healthy lifestyle

#### Quitline

Tel: 0800 00 22 00

Website: [www.quitnet.com](http://www.quitnet.com)

A freephone helpline for people who want to stop smoking

For booklets on healthy lifestyle – physical activity, stopping smoking and healthy eating – see *How the British Heart Foundation can help*, on page 27.

### Relationships

#### Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Children and young people can call this free, confidential helpline, about any problem at any time – day or night.

#### Parentline

Tel: 0808 800 2222

Website:

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Offers support to anyone parenting a child – parents, stepparents, grandparents and foster parents.

#### Relate

Herbert Gray College

Little Church Street

Rugby CV21 3AP

Tel: 01788 573241

Website: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

Offers counselling on relationship and sexual problems for couples or individuals through 2,500 trained counsellors across the UK.



# Support the British Heart Foundation

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) is the largest independent funder of heart research in the UK. We rely on donations to continue this life-saving work. If you would like to make a donation towards the work of the BHF then we would be very grateful for any amount you can give.

Make a gift today to help in the fight against heart disease.

Please use block capitals.

Please accept my donation of:

£10  £25  £50 Other £ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to the British Heart Foundation.

Or Call our donation hotline on 0870 606 3399.

Or Please debit my Mastercard/Visa/CAF card/Switch/Delta.  
(Delete as applicable.)

Card number

Switch only

Valid from \_\_\_\_\_

Expires end \_\_\_\_\_

Issue no (for Switch only) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

We have a range of publications and videos on different aspects of heart disease. If you would like a copy of our *Publications and Videos Catalogue*, please tick this box.

Or you can call the Heart Health line on 0870 600 6566 for an information pack.

Turn over to find out about other ways you can help us.

Please return this completed form with your donation to:

Supporter Services

British Heart Foundation

14 Fitzhardinge Street

London W1H 6DH

# Are you a taxpayer?

Gift Aid means the BHF can reclaim tax that you have paid and add it to your gifts. It is worth 28p for every £1 you donate. It costs you nothing and all you have to do is tick and date the Gift Aid Declaration below.

## Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat all donations I have made to the  
GA1 British Heart Foundation (BHF) since 6th April  
2000 and all donations I make hereafter, as  
Gift Aid.

Please write in today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick here if you are not currently a UK taxpayer  
GA2 (This is so that we don't write to you about Gift Aid again.)

You must pay an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount we reclaim from the Inland Revenue. Please make sure that cheques from a joint account are signed by the taxpayer.

You may cancel this Declaration at any time, and should do so if you stop being a UK taxpayer, by notifying us at: Supporter Services, British Heart Foundation, 14 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 6DH.

Please also notify us if you change your name and address. If you pay by CAF card then it is not possible to Gift Aid your donation to the BHF.

There are many other ways of helping...

Tick the boxes to find out more about anything that interests you.

- Regular giving by Direct Debit
- Joining a local group
- Sponsored events
- Christmas cards and gifts
- Becoming a volunteer in a British Heart Foundation shop

## What happens to your personal information

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) values your support. We will use the information you have given us for administration and marketing purposes. We may contact you by post or occasionally by phone or email. This may include passing on news and information on our charitable work (for example how we spend our money, and heart health information), BHF events, and related products and services from our subsidiary companies such as Christmas gift catalogues. Please tick the box if you do NOT want to hear from us at all. s

Occasionally we may pass on your details to other carefully-selected organisations we are working with. They may send you information on their events, products and services. Please tick the box if you do NOT want your details passed on in this way. MP02

bhf.org.uk

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## How the British Heart Foundation can help

### British Heart Foundation

14 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 6DH  
Tel: 020 7935 0185 Website: [bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)

### Heart Information Line: 0845 0 70 80 70

A helpline service for the public and health professionals, providing information on a wide range of issues relating to heart conditions. You can call the Heart Information Line if you would like to discuss any issues relating to stress and coronary heart disease, or to discuss making positive changes to your lifestyle to combat stress.

## Have your say

We would welcome your comments to help us produce the best information, for you, our audience. Why not let us know what you think? Contact us via our website [www.bhf.org.uk/yoursay](http://www.bhf.org.uk/yoursay)

## Publications and videos

The British Heart Foundation produces a range of publications and videos on healthy living and heart conditions. You can download our booklets from our website, or order them through the website at [www.bhf.org.uk/publications](http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications)

## Smoking

- *Your heart, smoking and how to give up*
- *Smoking and your heart*  
(a Heart Information Series booklet)

## Physical Activity

- *Get active!*
- *Put your heart into walking*
- *Physical activity and your heart*  
(a Heart Information Series booklet)

## Healthy eating

- *So you want to lose weight... for good*
- *Cut the saturated fat from your diet*
- *Food should be fun... and healthy!*
- *Eating for your heart*  
(a Heart Information Series booklet)

## Caring

- *Caring for someone with a heart problem*  
(a Heart Information Series booklet)

For a copy of the BHF *Publications and videos catalogue*, please contact:  
British Heart Foundation  
PO Box 138  
Northampton NN3 6WB  
Tel: 01604 640016  
Email: [ds-bhf@mail.dataforce.co.uk](mailto:ds-bhf@mail.dataforce.co.uk)

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