

Your Body's Defense Against Stress

1. As your stress level begins to rise, the hypothalamus gland in your brain causes the pituitary gland to release the hormone ACTH.
2. Just two seconds later, the adrenal gland releases non-adrenaline and adrenaline. Adrenaline gives your body more energy, causing your heart rate, body temperature and rate of carbohydrate consumption to increase.
3. Next, the pituitary gland releases 17 more hormones, and you feel a surge of energy in only 8 seconds.
4. The fuel for this instant energy is provided by the liver, which releases sugar into your bloodstream.
5. Your bloodstream is then crowded with red blood cells, which carry more oxygen to your muscles.
6. Now non-adrenaline, released with adrenaline from the adrenal gland, raises your blood pressure by constricting the artery walls.
7. As you try to focus on the source of your stress, your attention narrows.
8. In an attempt to relieve your stress, you pinpoint the immediate cause, which occupies all your thoughts for the moment.
9. Your senses become excited and hypersensitive in order for you to combat the stress culprit.
10. To keep the body from overheating, your perspiration increases.
11. Your face becomes pale because the blood is forced away from your skin.
12. In this state of alertness, your mouth stops producing saliva.
13. To allow more light in, your pupils dilate, which gives you a heightened sense of awareness.
14. Your muscles tighten up in preparation for intense use.
15. Digestion stops temporarily so the blood can be used for your muscles and brain.
16. Your body protects you from bleeding by rerouting your blood away from your skin. This causes your hands and feet to become cold.
17. As your muscles tense up, defecation and urination cease. The opposite, diarrhea or unpreventable urination, can be a reaction to the stress as well.

18. The immune system works below normal during the stressful period. You are more susceptible to illness at this time.

19. The cure for these symptoms of stress is total relaxation, which allows your body to replenish its resources and resume normal operation.