

Stress – An Overview and Ayurvedic Remedy

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Stress is construed as anything which constitutes a threat- most often perceived-which adversely affect the general well-being of the individual concerned. Modern life , especially in corporate life, stress has become a norm which has been accepted - albeit unwillingly - as a part and parcel of existence. Long and odd working hours, pressure to achieve targets all the time, unhealthy food, non-conducive working environment or even environmental factors like extreme or high altitude could stimulate stress in a person. And prolonged exposure to stress leads to a number of clinical ailments like hypertension, anxiety, depression or on milder scale produces peptic ulcers, Insomnia and host of other ailments. Stress - Sahasa as it is known in Ayurveda - plays an important role in the aetiology of several diseases. The "Eustress", positive life stimulant component of stress which helps us in improvement of all round performances - turns to "Distress", when this demand for improvement becomes persistent and unmanageable for an individual. As per Ayurveda, stress causes Ojahksaya (Loss of Immunity) making our body increasingly susceptible to various infectious diseases.

One of the basic tenet of Ayurveda is "Prevention is better than Cure". Keeping up with this adage here into the pivotal aim is to keep the onset of stress at bay i.e., negate chances of occurrence of stress and increase the coping capacity of the individual vis-a-vis stress if one become susceptible to it . To avoid occurrence of stress the body should be

protected by taking adequate care of Diet (Ahara), Sleep (Swapnoh) and Celibacy (Brahmacharyamiti), the three pillars of life. Any deviation in this primal aspects lead to variation of Tridoshas (Vata, Kapha and Pitta- three life supporting variants in the body) making it susceptible to diseases. In case of an unfortunate occurrence of stress (Sahasa), Ayurveda prescribes Lifestyle modification, Dietary interventions and finally Drug treatments. The management aspects of stress is well documented in Rasayana therapy, one of the eight branches of classic Ayurveda. Classical Ayurveda treatment approach to stress demands the patient to be non-violent with a balanced use of his sense organs with self-control and follow a nutritious dietary routine. Drug treatment which constitutes the final phase of the management of stress would only be effective if the above two aspects are followed in letter and spirit. The process aims to balance the vitiated doshas in the patient thereby bringing the patient back to a healthy state of well-being. The stress treatment mainly aim at modulation of immune response in the patient to bail him out of the immunosuppressive actions of the prolonged stress.

To conclude, as part of the stress avoidance one needs to follow a meditative non-violent life, eating dietarily balanced food. Try to Control your senses and desires and use them consciously. Despite all these measures if one gets caught up in the stress, it is recommended that consciously work up of the lifestyle modification and resort to Rasayana therapy under a well-founded Acharya (Teacher) of Ayurveda.