

IS STRESS HURTING YOUR HEART?



Emotional stress can have a negative impact on your heart health. If you're angry, anxious, tense, frustrated, frightened, or depressed, your body's natural response is to release stress hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline.

These hormones cause your heart to beat more rapidly and your blood vessels to narrow to help push blood to the center of the body. After your stress subsides, your blood pressure and heart rate should return to normal. But if you're continually stressed out, your body may not have a chance to recover. This is particularly risky for women.

"Women tend to have thinner vessels when compared to men; that's how we're built," said Kamala Tamirisa, MD, (<https://www.promedica.org/provider/kamala-p-tamirisa-md-facc-fhrs-cardiac-electrophysiology>) who is a cardiac electrophysiologist with ProMedica Physicians. "In women, stress and anxiety can narrow down the heart vessels." This narrowing of the blood vessels means that the heart gets less blood supply, which could lead to a heart attack.

It's not clear that stress alone causes high blood pressure or heart disease, but it does pose an indirect risk and has

negative effect on your general wellness. Constant stress can also lead to unhealthy habits, such as eating an unhealthy diet (<https://promedicahealthconnect.org/wellness/how-to-combat-stress-eating/>) or consuming more than the recommended amount of alcohol.

With April being **Stress Awareness Month**, now's a good time to make an effort to face stress with healthier habits. "It's a very good idea to try relaxation techniques, meditation,

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yoga or whatever is helpful to relax the mind, and to avoid depression (<https://promedicahealthconnect.org/body-and-conditions/what-isdepression/>) and anxiety disorder (<https://promedicahealthconnect.org/body-and-conditions/could-it-be-anxietydisorder/>)," advised Dr. Tamirisa. "The human body is a gift to us, we need to take good care of it."

Help lower your stress with these healthy habit tips from American Heart Association (<http://www.heart.org/bewell>).