



Stress

While stress is not a direct risk factor for chest, heart and stroke conditions, it does impact on your health, particularly by how we choose to cope with stress.

What is stress?

Stress is a natural reaction in the body, designed to give us short bursts of heightened energy or awareness as part of our instinctive 'fight or flight' reaction. We may experience stress because of worries about relationships, money, work, unemployment or ill health.

Pressure can help motivate us to be productive but prolonged periods of increased pressure leading to stress, can have serious consequences on health.

Signs of Stress

Stress can impact us emotionally, mentally and physically and the most common signs of stress include:

- **sleeping problems**
- **sweating**
- **loss of appetite**
- **difficulty concentrating**

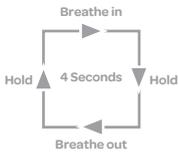
Managing Stress

Many people cope with stress by smoking, drinking too much alcohol and over-eating. These things can increase your risk of high blood pressure, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Try to identify what makes you feel stressed as this can help you avoid or cope with stressors in your life.

Making changes to your lifestyle and using positive coping techniques can help you manage stress and improve your wellbeing.

Positive Coping Techniques



1. Squared Breathing

Breathing exercises keep your mind focused and help lower your heart rate and blood pressure.



2. Reframing

Reframing is a technique which helps you view things in a different, less stressful light.



3. Mindfulness

Helps us to live in the present moment by using the natural tools of our breath, our body and our senses as anchors.



4. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

This mindfulness technique aims to distract your brain from the past or future by forcing it to focus on things in your present environment.

5 - things you see

4 - things you hear

3 - things you feel

2 - things you smell

1 - thing you taste



5. Physical Activity

Improves our physical health and also our mental wellbeing by releasing feel-good hormones in the brain.



6. Connect

Connect with the people around you to support and enrich your life: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours.



7. Give

Giving stimulates the reward system in the brain, making a person feel good and increases their self-worth.



8. Keep Learning

Learning throughout our lives contributes to self-esteem, social interaction, competence and self-efficacy.



9. Talk

Talking about your feelings can really help identify what is causing the stress.



10. Good Mood Foods

Certain foods contain nutrients that can improve our mood: oily fish, dark green leafy vegetables, berries, bananas, nuts and seeds and small amounts of dark chocolate.

Headquarters:

21 Dublin Road
Belfast BT2 7HB
T. 028 9032 0184
E. mail@nichs.org.uk
www.nichs.org.uk

Follow us:

 Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorthernIrelandChestHeartandStroke
 Twitter: @nichstweet
 Instagram: @nichstheartandstroke
 LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/nichs
 TikTok: @nichstheartandstroke



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver