

# APRIL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

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## Stress Awareness

### What is Stress?

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being.

### What are the signs of stress?

Stress makes it hard for us to relax and can come with a range of emotions, including anxiety and irritability. When stressed, we may find it difficult to concentrate. We may experience headaches or other body pains, an upset stomach or trouble sleeping. We may find we lose our appetite or eat more than usual. Chronic stress can worsen pre-existing health problems and may increase our use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.

Stressful situations can also cause or exacerbate mental health conditions, most commonly anxiety and depression, which require access to health care. When we suffer from a mental health condition, it may be

because our symptoms of stress have become persistent and have started affecting our daily functioning, including at work or school.

### Should we expect to be stressed in difficult situations?

Yes, it is natural to feel stressed in challenging situations such as job interviews, school exams, unrealistic workloads, an insecure job, or conflict with family, friends, or colleagues. For many people stress reduces over time as the situation improves or as they learn to cope emotionally with the situation. Stress tends to be widespread during events such as major economic crises, disease outbreaks, natural disasters, war, and community violence.

### How can I managed Stress

#### Learn stress management

WHO's stress management guide – Doing what matters in times of stress – aims to equip people with practical skills to cope with stress. A few minutes each day are enough to practise the guide's self-help techniques. The guide can be used alone or with its accompanying audio exercises.

# Stress Awareness

## Keep a daily routine

Having a daily schedule can help us use our time efficiently and feel more in control. Set time for regular meals, time with family members, exercise, daily chores, and other recreational activities.

## Get plenty of sleep

Getting enough sleep is important for both body and mind. Sleep repairs, relaxes, and rejuvenates our body and can help reverse the effect of stress.

### Good sleep habits (also known as sleep hygiene) include:

- Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends.
- If possible, make your sleeping area quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature.
- Limit your use of electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smart phones, before sleeping.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.



## Connect with others

Keep in touch with family and friends and share your concerns and feelings with people you trust. Connecting with others can lift our mood and help us feel less stressed.

## Eat healthy

What we eat and drink can affect our health. Try to eat a balanced diet and to eat at regular intervals. Drink enough fluids. Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables if you can.

## Exercise regularly

Regular daily exercise can help to reduce stress. This can include walking, as well as more intensive exercise.

## Limit time following news

Spending too much time following news on television and social media can increase stress. Limit the time you spend following the news if it increases your stress.

**Source: Stress (who.int) Accessed 7 March 2025**

# Health Awareness

## 7 Tips to live a happier life

Do you wake up feeling sluggish most mornings? Have caffeinated beverages become a necessity to help power you through the day?

If this sounds familiar, it's time to ditch the quick fixes you rely on, and develop an energy management plan. Getting started may seem daunting, but soon you'll be energized to keep going once you recap the benefits of a happier, healthier, and more productive lifestyle.

### What is energy management?

Think of your energy as a limited resource, like money in an account. You begin the day with a certain amount to spend. The amount varies from person to person based on factors, such as age, sleep, stress levels, medical conditions, and lifestyle.

Activities and interactions withdraw energy from or deposit energy into your account. While you may not always have control over activities that deplete your energy, you can take steps to deposit more energy into your account.

Follow these seven tips to increase your energy and live a happier, healthier, more productive life:

#### 1. Eat nourishing food.

A well-balanced, healthy diet is at the core of well-being. But it's common to regard healthy eating primarily as a tool for weight loss. According to the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and whole grains is needed for optimal energy. You really are what you eat.

Consume a variety of foods from all the food groups to get a range of nutrients to provide energy throughout the day. Opt for fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, especially nutrient-dense dark, leafy greens, and broccoli, as well as orange vegetables, like carrots and sweet potatoes. You can choose from many types of fish and legumes to choose from for healthy protein options. Aim to eat 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, rice, or pasta daily.

#### 2. Sleep seven to eight hours per night.

Prioritizing sleep is one of the best things you can do to set yourself up for a successful, energized day. Sleep deprivation can perpetuate serious health conditions, as well as negatively affect your mood, motivation, and energy levels. Getting quality sleep is a healthy habit many people need to improve. Most adults need at least seven to eight hours of shut-eye each night, so what prevents them from getting it?

Observe your sleep patterns if you struggle with sleep. Take note of how much you sleep each night, factors that contribute to your sleep or lack of it, how rested you feel, and how much energy you have during your day. Then try sleep strategies to improve your sleep, like creating a relaxing and restful environment, minimizing light and noise, establishing a bedtime routine, managing stress, and turning off electronic devices.

Whatever you decide to start with, be consistent. Utilizing the same sleep routine and sleep strategies will help develop your body's internal alarm clock and can lead to improved sleep quality. With improved sleep quality, people experience better health, and improved emotional well-being, lower risk of diseases, and are more productive.

#### 3. Keep company with good people.

Maximize the amount of time that you spend with people you enjoy being around. Connecting with others who radiate positivity and have similar interests will excite and energize you.

On the other side, people you don't relate to or who have negative outlooks, complain often, or make poor choices will only drain your energy account. Be selective about the company you keep.

It's important to set limits and boundaries to protect yourself and conserve your energy when around people who do not refill your energy reserves.

#### 4. Avoid news overdose.

Consuming news is an important way to stay connected to what's happening in the world. It can be educational, entertaining, and even uplifting. Unfortunately, the news too frequently is filled with stories of suffering. These stories can skew your view of the world and cause you to focus on your worst fears instead of recognizing the good that surrounds you.

You can't avoid these stories altogether, but try to minimize your exposure when you can, especially during trying times.

#### 5. Get regular exercise.

Do you find yourself feeling lethargic halfway through the day? Have you ever gotten winded by simple everyday duties, such as grocery shopping or household chores? The Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults complete at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week. Contrary to what you might believe, this will add to your energy account and not subtract from it.

Exercise relieves stress and tension, strengthens muscles, and boosts endurance, and helps your body work more efficiently during other physical tasks or activities.

#### 6. Do something meaningful each day.

What do you feel passionate about? Do you have a special talent that you'd like to practice more often or share with others? Do something you enjoy every day, even if it's a simple act like cooking a healthy meal or listening to your favourite song. Putting effort into the things that matter most to you will help you use and reserve your energy in ways that will bring out the best in you.

#### 7. Think good thoughts for others.

Maintaining a compassionate mindset is another way to conserve energy. One example of practicing this way of thinking is called kind attention. For example, try to make eye contact with a stranger and smile, while thinking "I wish you well." This positive act can, instead, keep you from judging that person. Judging others can cause us to place judgment on ourselves, and that type of negative internal dialogue can be exhausting.

You'll feel better with each step you take toward this important self-care investment.

Here are a few simple activities that will help you become more mindful of caring for yourself:

##### • Monitor your energy.

Take your energy "temperature" at various points throughout the day, assigning it a number from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest energy level. Pay attention to the details of your day so you can identify the people or events that impact you the most.

##### • Make incremental changes.

Once you are aware of some of the people or events that sabotage your energy, consider your next steps. Rather than tackling everything at once, choose an area that is important to you, and be realistic with the goals you set. For instance, if disorganization in your home is a big source of daily stress, pick one cabinet, closet, or drawer to clear out each week instead of overwhelming yourself with doing it all at once. Then move on to your next goal when you feel ready.

##### • Plan and prioritize.

Take note of the times during the day when your energy levels tend to be the highest. Decide how you can take advantage of those moments by prioritizing important tasks when you are feeling fresh and productive.

**Source: 7 tips to live a happier life - Mayo Clinic Health System Accessed 8 March 2024**



# World Malaria Day 25 April 2024

## Overview

Malaria is a disease caused by a parasite. The parasite is spread to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes. People who have malaria usually feel very sick with a high fever and shaking chills.

While the disease is uncommon in temperate climates, malaria is still common in tropical and subtropical countries. Each year nearly 290 million people are infected with malaria, and more than 400,000 people die of the disease.

To reduce malaria infections, world health programs distribute preventive drugs and insecticide-treated bed nets to protect people from mosquito bites. The World Health Organization has recommended a malaria vaccine for use in children who live in countries with high numbers of malaria cases.

Protective clothing, bed nets and insecticides can protect you while traveling. You also can take preventive medicine before, during and after a trip to a high-risk area. Many malaria parasites have developed resistance to common drugs used to treat the disease.

## Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of malaria may include:

- Fever
- Chills
- General feeling of discomfort
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Muscle or joint pain
- Fatigue
- Rapid breathing
- Rapid heart rate
- Cough

Some people who have malaria experience cycles of malaria "attacks." An attack usually starts with shivering and chills, followed by a high fever, followed by sweating and a return to normal temperature.

Malaria signs and symptoms typically begin within a few weeks after being bitten by an infected mosquito. However, some types of malaria parasites can lie dormant in your body for up to a year.

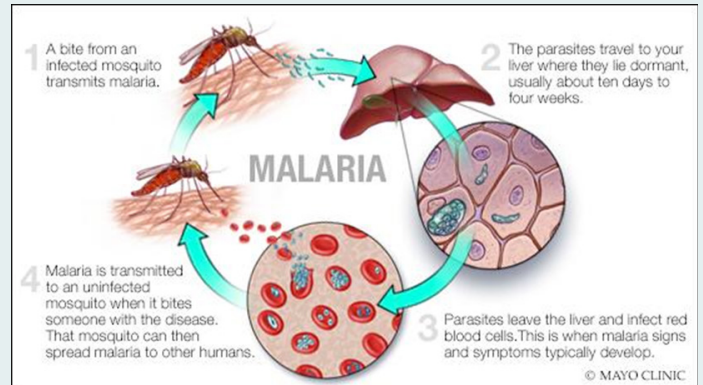
## When to see a doctor

Talk to your doctor if you experience a fever while living in or after traveling to a high-risk malaria region. If you have severe symptoms, seek emergency medical attention.

## Causes

Malaria is caused by a single-celled parasite of the genus plasmodium. The parasite is transmitted to humans most commonly through mosquito bites.

## Mosquito transmission cycle



## Malaria transmission cycle

Malaria spreads when a mosquito becomes infected with the disease after biting an infected person, and the infected mosquito then bites a noninfected person. The malaria parasites enter that person's bloodstream and travel to the liver. When the parasites mature, they leave the liver and infect red blood cells.

- **Uninfected mosquito.** A mosquito becomes infected by feeding on a person who has malaria.
- **Transmission of parasite.** If this mosquito bites you in the future, it can transmit malaria parasites to you.
- **In the liver.** Once the parasites enter your body, they travel to your liver — where some types can lie dormant for as long as a year.
- **Into the bloodstream.** When the parasites mature, they leave the liver and infect your red blood cells. This is when people typically develop malaria symptoms.
- **On to the next person.** If an uninfected mosquito bites you at this point in the cycle, it will become infected with your malaria parasites and can spread them to the other people it bites.

## Other modes of transmission

Because the parasites that cause malaria affect red blood cells, people can also catch malaria from exposure to infected blood, including:

- From mother to unborn child
- Through blood transfusions
- By sharing needles used to inject drugs

## Risk factors

The greatest risk factor for developing malaria is to live in or to visit areas where the disease is common. These include the tropical and subtropical regions of:

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- South and Southeast Asia
- Pacific Islands
- Central America and northern South America

The degree of risk depends on local malaria control, seasonal changes in malaria rates and the precautions you take to prevent mosquito bites.

# World Malaria Day - 25 April 2024



## WORLD MALARIA DAY

APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>

### Risks of more-severe disease

People at increased risk of serious disease include:

- Young children and infants
- Older adults
- Travelers coming from areas with no malaria
- Pregnant women and their unborn children

In many countries with high malaria rates, the problem is worsened by lack of access to preventive measures, medical care, and information.

### Immunity can wane

Residents of a malaria region may be exposed to the disease enough to acquire a partial immunity, which can lessen the severity of malaria symptoms. However, this partial immunity can disappear if you move to a place where you're no longer frequently exposed to the parasite.

### Complications

Malaria can be fatal, particularly when caused by the plasmodium species common in Africa. The World Health Organization estimates that about 94% of all malaria deaths occur in Africa — most commonly in children under the age of 5.

Malaria deaths are usually related to one or more serious complications, including:

- Cerebral malaria. If parasite-filled blood cells block small blood vessels to your brain (cerebral malaria), swelling of your brain or brain damage may occur. Cerebral malaria may cause seizures and coma.
- Breathing problems. Accumulated fluid in your lungs (pulmonary edema) can make it difficult to breathe.
- Organ failure. Malaria can damage the kidneys or liver or cause the spleen to rupture. Any of these conditions can be life-threatening.
- Anaemia. Malaria may result in not having enough red blood cells for an adequate supply of oxygen to your body's tissues (anemia).
- Low blood sugar. Severe forms of malaria can cause low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), as can quinine — a common medication used to combat malaria. Very low blood sugar can result in coma or death.

### Malaria may recur

Some varieties of the malaria parasite, which typically cause milder forms of the disease, can persist for years and cause relapses.

### Prevention

If you live in or are traveling to an area where malaria is common, take steps to avoid mosquito bites. Mosquitoes are most active between dusk and dawn. To protect yourself from mosquito bites, you should:

- Cover your skin. Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts. Tuck in your shirt, and tuck pant legs into socks.
- Apply insect repellent to skin. Use an insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency on any exposed skin. These include repellents that contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-3,8-diol (PMD) or 2-undecanone. Do not use a spray directly on your face. Do not use products with oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or p-Menthane-3,8-diol (PMD) on children under age 3.
- Apply repellent to clothing. Sprays containing permethrin are safe to apply to clothing.
- Sleep under a net. Bed nets, particularly those treated with insecticides, such as permethrin, help prevent mosquito bites while you are sleeping.

### Preventive medicine

If you'll be traveling to a location where malaria is common, talk to your doctor a few months ahead of time about whether you should take drugs before, during and after your trip to help protect you from malaria parasites.

In general, the drugs taken to prevent malaria are the same drugs used to treat the disease. What drug you take depends on where and how long you are traveling and your own health.

### Vaccine

The World Health Organization has recommended a malaria vaccine for use in children who live in countries with high numbers of malaria cases. Researchers are continuing to develop and study malaria vaccines to prevent infection.

**Source: Malaria - Symptoms & causes - Mayo Clinic Accessed 8 March 2024**

# Testicular Cancer



## Overview

### Male reproductive system

Testicular cancer is a growth of cells that starts in the testicles. The testicles, which are also called testes, are in the scrotum. The scrotum is a loose bag of skin underneath the penis. The testicles make sperm and the hormone testosterone.

Testicular cancer isn't a common type of cancer. It can happen at any age, but it happens most often between the ages of 15 and 45.

The first sign of testicular cancer often is a bump or lump on a testicle. The cancer cells can grow quickly. They often spread outside the testicle to other parts of the body.

Testicular cancer is highly treatable, even when it spreads to other parts of the body. Treatments depend on the type of testicular cancer that you have and how far it has spread. Common treatments include surgery and chemotherapy.

## Symptoms

### Testicular lumps

Signs and symptoms of testicular cancer include:

- A lump or swelling in either testicle
- A feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- A dull ache in the lower belly or groin
- Sudden swelling in the scrotum
- Pain or discomfort in a testicle or the scrotum
- Enlargement or tenderness of the breast tissue
- Back pain

Usually testicular cancer only happens in one testicle.

### When to see a doctor

See your health care provider if you detect any symptoms that last longer than two weeks. These include pain, swelling or lumps in your testicles or groin area.

## Causes

**It's not clear what causes most testicular cancers.**

Testicular cancer starts when something causes changes to the DNA of testicle cells. A cell's DNA holds the instructions that tell the cell what to do. The changes tell the cells to grow and multiply quickly. The cancer cells go on living when healthy cells would die as part of their natural life cycle. This causes a lot of extra cells in the testicle that can form a mass called a tumour.

In time, the tumour can grow beyond the testicle. Some cells might

break away and spread to other parts of the body. Testicular cancer most often spreads to the lymph nodes, liver, and lungs. When testicular cancer spreads, it's called metastatic testicular cancer.

Nearly all testicular cancers begin in the germ cells. The germ cells in the testicle make sperm. It's not clear what causes DNA changes in the germ cells.

## Risk factors

Factors that may increase your risk of testicular cancer include:

- Having an undescended testicle, which is called cryptorchidism. The testes form in the belly during fetal development. They typically descend into the scrotum before birth. If you have a testicle that never descended, your risk of testicular cancer is higher. The risk is increased even if you've had surgery to move the testicle to the scrotum.
- Having a family history of testicular cancer. If testicular cancer runs in your family, you might have an increased risk.
- Being a young adult. Testicular cancer can happen at any age. But it's most common in teens and young adults between 15 and 45.
- Being white. Testicular cancer is most common in white people.

## Prevention

There's no way to prevent testicular cancer. If you get testicular cancer, there's nothing you could have done to prevent it.

## Testicular cancer screening

Some health care providers recommend regular testicle self-exams. During a testicular self-exam you feel your testicles for any lumps or other changes.

Not all health care providers agree with this recommendation. There's no research to show that self-exams can lower the risk of dying of testicular cancer. Even when it is found at a late stage, testicular cancer is likely to be cured.

Still, you might find it helpful to become aware of the usual feel of your testicles. You can do this by doing a testicular self-exam. If you notice any changes that last longer than two weeks, make an appointment with your health care provider.

**Source: Testicular cancer - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic  
Accessed 12 March 2024**

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