

Preventing the harmful effects of chronic stress

What is chronic stress?



Stress is a part of everyone's life. It is a physical and emotional reaction to routine challenges in our lives, such as the demands of work and school, money problems, relationships issues, etc. as well as to sudden threats or adverse events. When you are stressed, your body releases hormones that produce a "fight-or-flight" response, nature's way to help you survive a threatening situation. Think of a zebra who is fleeing a lion and needs extra adrenaline to outrun his attacker.

Unlike animals in the wild, however, the "fight-or-flight" response in humans may not get turned off, if we encounter numerous stressors throughout the week or in the months to come. This heightened sense of alert creates chronic stress, with many negative effects on the physical body and our mental health, as you can see by the graphic below.



90%

60-90% of all health care visits are related to stress

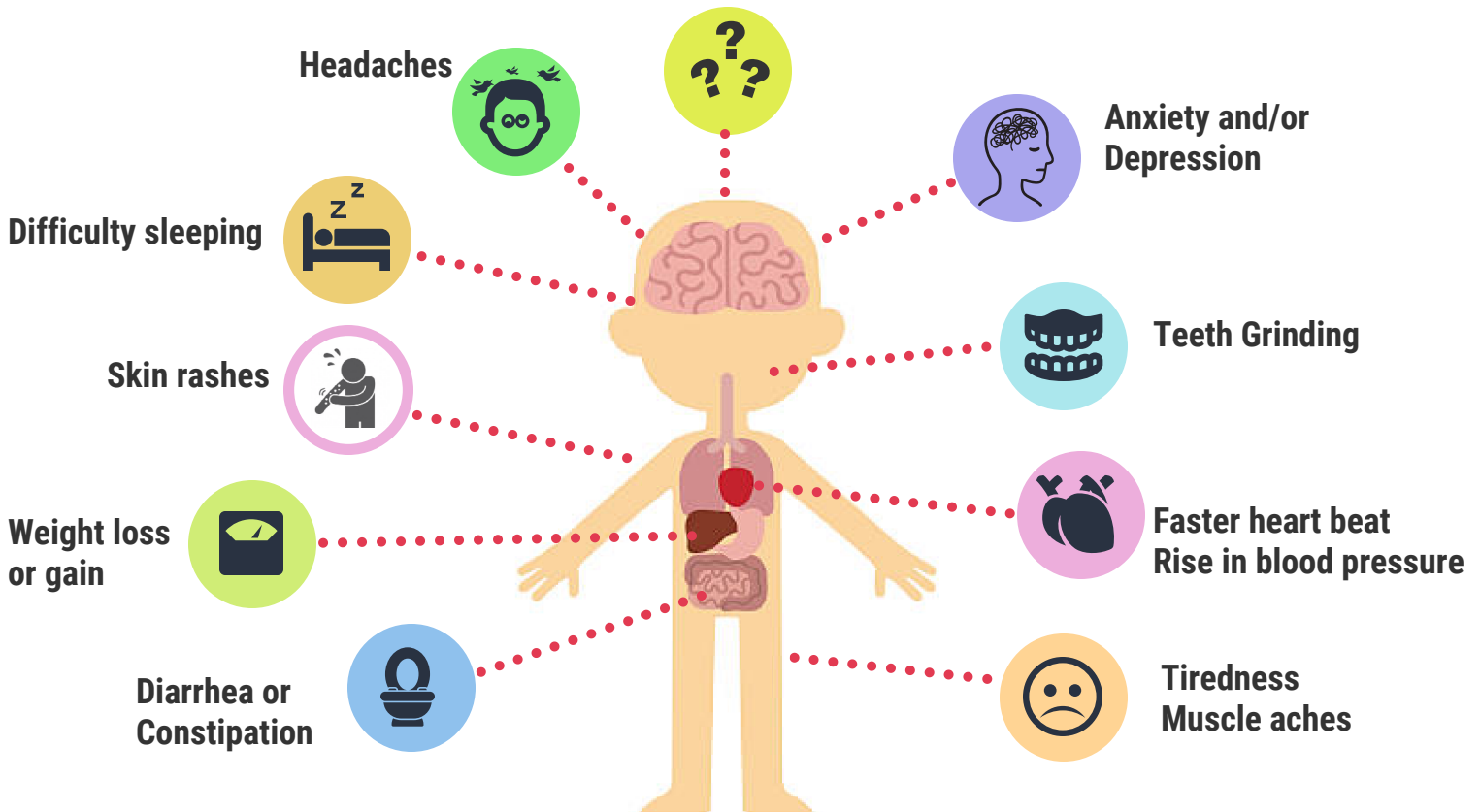


90%

80-90% of behavioral problems in school are related to stress

What are the effects of chronic stress on the body?

Trouble concentrating and/or Irritability



Headaches

Anxiety and/or Depression

Difficulty sleeping

Teeth Grinding

Skin rashes

Faster heart beat
Rise in blood pressure

Weight loss
or gain

Diarrhea or
Constipation

Tiredness
Muscle aches