STRESS AWARENESS WEEK

WHAT IS STRESS IS, HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT OUR GENES AND WHAT WE CAN WE DO TO MANAGE STRESS THROUGH DIET AND LIFESTYLE.

HEALTH SCREENING DNA & BLOOD TESTS - OSTEOPATHY - REFLEXOLOGY - NUTRITION - HOMEOPATHY - PREGNANCY TREATMENTS - ACUPUNCTURE - MASSAGE THERAPY - PERSONAL TRAINING - QIGONG - PILATES & YOGA & MORE

As it is stress awareness month, we thought we would give you the low down on Stress:

What is stress?

How does stress affect our genes?

What we can we do to manage stress through diet and lifestyle?

Defining stress:

According to the Health and Safety Executive stress is “an adverse reaction to excessive pressures or other demands” although others extend the definition to "perceived stress".

According to the Stress Management Society, a study carried out in 2020 showed that since the COVID-19 restrictions started in March:

65% felt more stressed than usual

53% felt more anxious than usual

43% felt more depressed than usual

Almost **9 in 10** say that work-related stress, anxiety, and depression effects their home life.

What are the different types of stress?

Acute Stress

Acute stress is usually fleeting – running for the train, spilling your coffee on the carpet, getting a flat tyre. Acute stress can also be a protective measure by the brain and body to alert us to danger (think back to the cave men and saber tooth tigers!) and can also be helpful to us in order to help us change habits and motivate us in different ways.

Some symptoms that you may have experienced a form of acute stress may include:

- Headaches, neck and back pain
- Heart burn, digestion problems, constipation
- Increased anger, depression and anxiety
- Increased blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, problems relaxing/sleeping

Episodic acute stress

Episodic acute stress is when episodes of acute stress become more frequent. You will find that people who have busy working or family lives, or cannot quite get the work life balance, will fall into this category fairly easily.

Episodic acute stress may present as:

• Muscle tension, tension in shoulders, headaches and migraines
• Weakened immune system with a higher risk of colds and flu
• Increased risk of anxiety, depression and mental fatigue

Chronic stress

Chronic stress, as the name suggests, is a state of chronic high alert that is caused by a pronounced stress response over an extended time period. Your body can no longer differentiate between perceived 'real' and 'unreal' threats which becomes dangerous when we live in a modern world of perceived threats around every corner. This activation of the sympathetic nervous system our flight and fight response which triggers the release of the hormone cortisol, which is responsible for a whole variety of metabolic functions, such as helping to regulate your thyroid hormone and your absorption and digestion of nutrients from food.

Our thyroid regulates nearly every major metabolic function in your body, and as such, a poor functioning thyroid can have a detrimental effect on nearly every area of your health. Multiple examples of poor thyroid function include weight gain, reduced metabolic rate, fatigue, feeling depressed or moody, dry hair and skin, and many more.

How does genetics and your individual genes play into this? Well, your genes will actually predispose you to a variety of stress outcomes...

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

HEADACHES
NECK & BACK PAIN
MUSCLE TENSION
LOWERED IMMUNITY
LOW MOOD
DIGESTIVE ISSUES
& MORE

Below are the 6 main areas that the Formula Health Nutrigenetics Test analyses and provides you with specific information on.

Stress and Pressure

Pressure is the perception that one may have of external factors affecting life. Many people often conclude that they are stressed due to the pressures placed upon them from finances, friends or family, perceived duty, work and a multitude of other factors. How one responds to the situation may differ due to their gene variations and so translating this result will lead to a superior understanding of oneself.

Stress and Memory

Acute stress may cause a sudden loss of recall, which unfortunately could come at a time when you need it the most (think exams, tests, etc.). Chronic stress might also lead to an inability to actually form new memories, which - again - if you are revising, practicing for an event, or meeting new people, could be highly detrimental.

Our genes play a role in this response and understanding this may help you put into place certain pre-test rituals, methods of revising, etc. that may reduce stress levels and therefore benefit your memory.

Dealing with Stress

The way we deal with stress is highly important. Methods to reduce stress may include breathing exercises, meditation, getting the correct nutrition, getting regular exercise through forms such as running, walking or yoga and so on. Certain genetic variants suggest that many people are more likely to keep themselves isolated when chronically stressed.

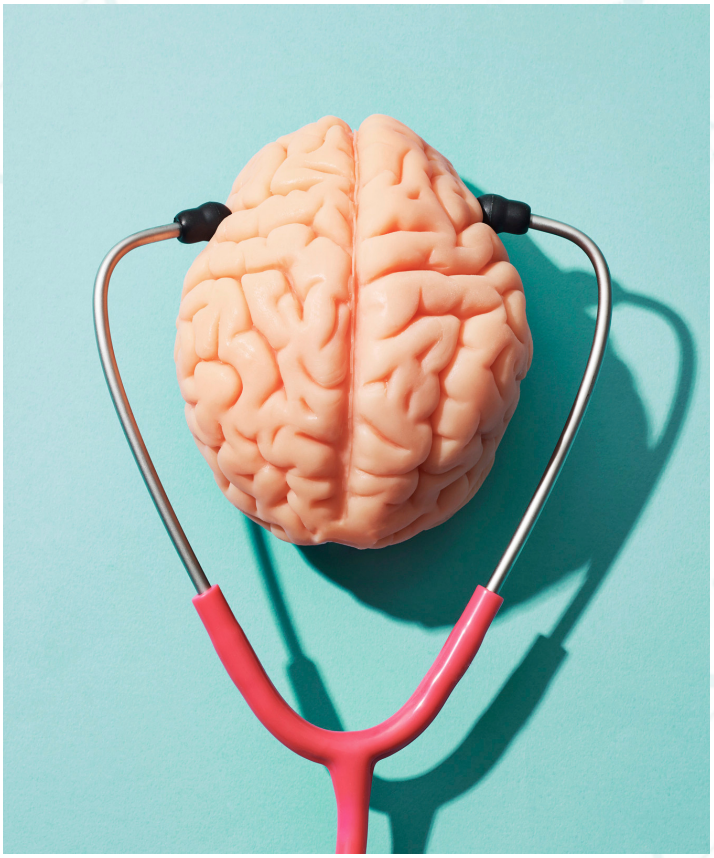
Understanding this in our genetics can help us recognise our thought patterns and behaviours and may therefore encourage us to respond to stress and stressful situations by talking with others instead of going into isolation.

Stress leading to physical Symptoms

Stress can be the driver behind many different physical symptoms. Acute stress may cause tremors, muscle twitches, sweating, flushing, increased heart rate, skin itching, headaches, digestive upsets and more.

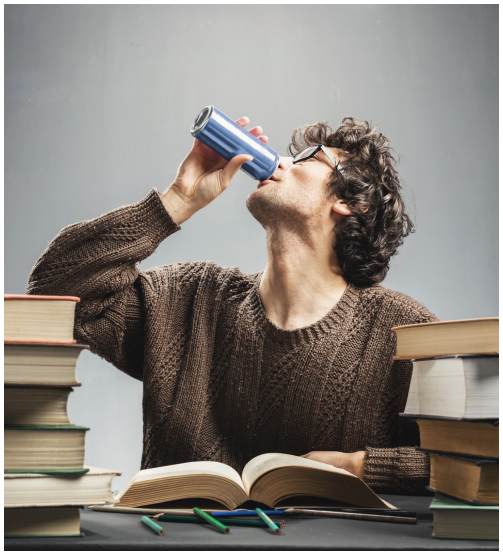
Chronic stress can cause increased blood pressure, muscle aches and can lead to a number of health symptoms and diseases such as diabetes, obesity, migraines, chronic skin conditions, immune dysfunction, increased risk of injury among many others.

Looking at specific genotypes can help us begin to paint a picture of to how we may respond to stress from a physical perspective.



Stress and the Heart

A major area of physical symptoms derived from stress is that of the heart. Stress can affect the heart in both a chronic and acute sense and these could have either the same or different symptoms. Certain genetic variants being linked to how the heart may be affected by stress exist so getting to know how we respond to stress and how to manage it, we can take proactive steps in protecting our heart and wider cardiovascular system.



Caffeine and Stress

Caffeine is the globe's favourite and most widely psychoactive drug. When we need a "pick me up" ahead of a busy day with a poor night's sleep behind us or to get through the mid-afternoon slump, coffee is there as a friendly soother.

Caffeine, like all drugs, affects people in a variety of different ways and as such may or may not be beneficial in times of stress. Caffeine inhibits the hormone adenosine whilst increasing neurotransmitters dopamine, acetylcholine, serotonin and norepinephrine of which this whole process stops the brain from relaxing and promoting feelings of tiredness as well as increasing adrenaline in the brain.

Physically caffeine will increase the heart rate of many people, which could exacerbate any type of stressful situation that someone may be facing.

Energy drinks containing caffeine are often used in times of exams and tests and so understanding how you may respond in these stressful situations is vital for making the correct choice.

There are so many differing ways that stress can manifest itself in our daily lives. One of the keys to combating this is firstly knowing that you may be genetically predisposed to having a specific outcome and secondly, understanding this can help you can mitigate its effect with certain tweaks and 'upgrades' to your diet, exercise and lifestyle.

A few examples of how you can change your lifestyle would be to include regular exercise as it increases the expression of the **BDNF gene (Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor)**, that is linked to improvement of cognitive performance, memory and the alleviation of anxiety and physical symptoms of stress. As little as 15 minutes each day may be all you need to help.

Qigong and **yoga** are excellent mindfulness practices which have been shown to be beneficial to those suffering with stress through the connection of breath and the hugely rewarding physical benefits available. **Eating in a way that supports your individual requirements** is also highly important to help support the body through times of stress in many ways such as with sleep, mood, digestion, immunity and pain and **homeopathic remedies** can also help to support the body's response to common stress symptoms .

The other major gene to be aware of in stress as **COMT (Catechol-O-Methyltransferase)** often referred to the "Warrior or Worrier" gene. Variants on gene expression on COMT determine areas such as pain thresholds, how we respond to events and decision making.

You could also look to include more vitamin C and sources of B vitamins.

Studies have shown that Vitamin C can help neutralise the levels of stress hormones circulating round the body, whilst also being beneficial to the immune system and B Vitamins are required for healthy functioning of the nervous system and brain function.

Food's high in vitamin C include papaya, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussel sprouts and strawberries

Food's high in B-Vitamins include eggs, salmon, mushrooms, nuts and seeds, chickpeas, and lentils.

Trying an acupuncture or reflexology treatment could also be beneficial as these therapies work with the meridians and pressure points that link directly to specific areas of the body to promote the rebalancing of homeostasis which becomes of kilter in times of stress and illness.

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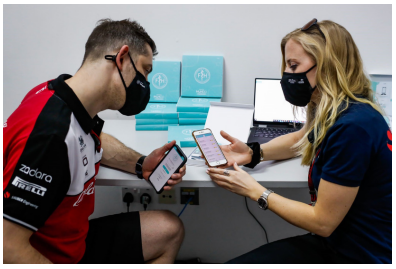
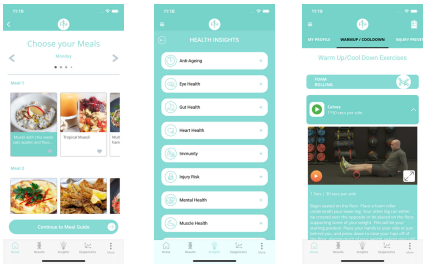
At Formula Health we are commited to our clients overall health and wellbeing which is why nutrigenetics testing forms part of a highly useful tool that contributes to effective and proactive functional diagnostics that help our clients to take the driving seat of their own health.

FOR MORE INFO ON OUR NUTRIGENETICS TESTING, CALL US ON 0118 418 1825 OR HEAD TO OUR ONLINE SHOP





Our clients are enjoying our DNA testing Kit with add on 1-2-1 Nutritional Support from our Nutritional Therapist

"The genetics testing was the perfect opportunity to touch base with my nutrition and I am so glad to have had you there to help with that!"