THE PHYSICAL SIGNS THAT YOU SHOULD NOT IGNORE

Heartburn, headaches, spots? Put them down to STRESS

EVERYONE experiences stress – with new research showing four in five of us feel anxious every week. While a little stress is good, too much can be bad for our wellbeing and cause skin breakouts, neck pain and bloating. Here, The Sun’s Dr Carol Cooper looks at the physical effects of stress – and gives tips on how to get the balance back.

Heartburn

STRESS can increase the amount of stomach acid, causing a burning feeling in your chest from it rising up the oesophagus. Try eating little and often and don’t eat late at night.

Erratic periods

THE stress hormone cortisol interferes with the delicate balance of female sex hormones, oestrogen and progesterone, which can in turn make periods erratic or even absent. It’s best to have a well-balanced diet as weight changes can also affect hormones. A missed period can also mean pregnancy, of course, so test for that.

Headache

TENSION headaches, often linked to stress, tend to worsen as the day goes on and are caused by scalp muscle contractions. Meditation or yoga can help, as can warm baths or a cool cloth across your forehead. Painkillers may help at first, but the headache often recurs. See a GP if headaches often occur in the morning or you vomit or have other unexpected symptoms.

Bowel issues

THE gut is controlled by the autonomic system – part of the nervous system that takes care of many bodily functions. Stress hormones seem to reset this part of the fight-or-flight response, and the bowels operate erratically as a result. Avoid laxatives if constipated as they can cause dehydration, which adds to anxiety.

Skin breakouts

STRESS often causes skin breakouts, especially round the chin and mouth as the stress hormone cortisol tells glands in the skin to make more oil. Keep your skin clean using a good face wash and exfoliate to clear dead skin and unclog pores. Drink plenty of water to hydrate the skin, too, and avoid touching your face, which can spread spots causing bacteria.

Heartburn

- A wonderful picture book that sets up conversations between the child and their parent, helping them get to know each other better. It’s very funny and makes you think.

- A book you can read with your children night after night. It’s extremely reassuring and calm, extremely reassuring and calm, the artwork is joyous.

- A book you think about what you might like to adapt, improve or simply enjoy it. It will make anyone of any age want to draw or dream.

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