

# IT'S YOUR HEALTH SPRING 2018



the Advocacy  
Alliance

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www.theadvocacyalliance.org



## APRIL IS NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress?  
How does it affect your health? What can you do about it?

Stress is how the brain and body respond demands such as exercise, life changes, school, work, or traumatic events. Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stress events learn how to cope with the stressor and if you cannot, then

know when to ask for help.

We all react differently to a stressful situation. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Almost anything can cause stress and for some people, just thinking about something can cause stress. Sometimes there is no identifiable cause. Mental health issues, such as depression or a sense off frustration and anxiety, can make people feel stressed more easily than others.

### HERE ARE FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT STRESS:

- **Stress effects everyone.** Everyone feels stress from time to time. Some people cope with stress more effectively than others and there are different types of stress, all of which may cause physical and mental health risks. A stressor may be occur one time and be short term or it can be an occurrence that keeps happening over a long period of time.
- **Health problems can occur if the stress response goes to long.** People may feel stress in different ways. For example, some will experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sadness, anger or irritability and sleeplessness. Over time, continues strain on your body from chronic stress may contribute to serious health problems that include heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and mental health disorders such as depression that can lead to suicide.

### HCQU Trainings

Our Health Care Quality Unit is always available for trainings for groups large and small. In addition to group trainings, we offer web trainings 24 hours a day/7 days per week. If you are interested in scheduling a training, or have any questions about web trainings, please contact Tammy LaGrafte, R.N., Director, South Central PA Health Care Quality Unit at [tl@theadvocacyalliance.org](mailto:tl@theadvocacyalliance.org) or toll-free at 1-877-315-6855.

For a list of our current web trainings please go to <http://www.southcentralpa-hcqu.org/Trainings/trainings.htm>.

- **Not all stress is bad.** Some experiences that are generally considered positive can lead to stress, such as having a baby, going on vacation or moving. These stressors are short term and usually do not affect our health.
- **There are ways to manage stress.** There are lifestyle changes you can make to help prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed. This includes self-help and care that may include a physical or therapist.
- **If you are overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.** We all react differently to a stressful situation. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Almost anything can cause stress and for some people, just thinking about something can cause stress. Sometimes there is no identifiable cause. Mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, can make people feel stressed more easily than others.



### LIFE EVENTS THAT CAN TRIGGER STRESS MAY INCLUDE:

- ✓ Lack of money
- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Family problems
- ✓ Excessive noise, overcrowding
- ✓ Moving
- ✓ Neighbors
- ✓ Relationship problems
- ✓ Driving in traffic



### SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

- ✓ Muscle aches
- ✓ Pain in the back or chest
- ✓ Fainting
- ✓ Stomach problems
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ High blood pressure
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Drug and alcohol use
- ✓ Sweating
- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Breathing faster
- ✓ Sleep disturbance
- ✓ Nail biting



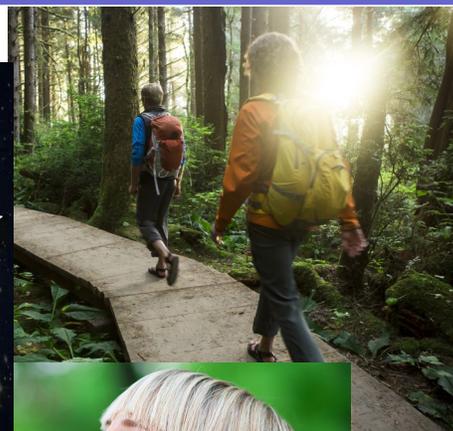
## MANAGEMENT

This includes lifestyle choices you can take to manage or prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed, such as:

- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Breathing and relaxation
- ✓ Reducing intake of alcohol and drugs
- ✓ Talking
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Support networks
- ✓ Prioritizing
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Stress techniques can help to by removing or change the source of stress

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.

- William James



## DIAGNOSES

A doctor will usually diagnose stress by asking you about symptoms and life events that you have experienced. Treatment may include therapy that can help induce relaxation that may include reflexology and aromatherapy. Doctors will not usually prescribe medication for coping with stress unless the patient has an underlying illness such as depression or anxiety.



**ALWAYS  
REMEMBER THAT  
IF YOU FEEL ALONE  
TO TALK TO A  
PROFESSIONAL  
AND ASK FOR  
HELP!**



## WHAT IS 22Q DELETION SYNDROME?

Also known as **22q**, it has been said to be *“the most common ‘rare’ syndrome you’ve never heard of.”* This genetic syndrome is also known by DiGeorge Syndrome, Velocardiofacial syndrome (VCFS), and Shprintzen Syndrome. You may be quite surprised to learn that it is the second most common genetic cause of intellectual disabilities, second only to Down Syndrome. It is conservatively estimated that 22q occurs in as many as 1 in every 4000 live births.

### WHERE DOES THE NAME COME FROM?

22 refers to the chromosome where the change occurs (it is a small chromosome in every cell in the body); q refers to the long arm of the chromosome; 11.2 is the location on that chromosome; deletion means a piece is missing from one of the pair of chromosome 22; and syndrome refers to a collection of features.

### HOW IS 22Q SYNDROME DIAGNOSED?

Each person diagnosed with 22q syndrome may present a unique set of over 180 symptoms, and no two individuals are likely to have the same presentation of symptoms. Some symptoms are readily apparent at birth, during infancy and early childhood which is the time many genetic syndromes are diagnosed. However, some symptoms do not emerge until years later. To further complicate the diagnostic process, many of the features of 22q are not unusual to infants and young children. Ultimately, the diagnosis is made through genetic testing.

### LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT JUST A SAMPLING OF THE OVER 180 SYMPTOMS THAT MAY OCCUR:

- Hearing loss, chronic middle ear infections, and palate abnormalities (i.e., cleft palate) resulting in hypernasal speech
- An overbite of the upper jaw and chronic dental cavities
- Heart defects including Tetralogy of Fallot (a group of 4 specific heart defects), interrupted aortic arch and ventral septal defects
- Frequent respiratory problems including pneumonia, asthma, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Dysphagia, constipation, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and gallstones
- Changes in the renal system and renal failure in adulthood
- Skeletal abnormalities, especially in childhood, involving the spine and ribs
- Seizures and low calcium blood levels are frequently seen
- Intellectual disability
- A wide array of mental health issues, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), depression, anxiety disorders, and Schizophrenia
- Low calcium blood levels due to hypoparathyroidism, an uncommon condition in which the body secretes abnormally low levels of parathyroid hormone, or PTH. PTH is key to regulating and maintaining a balance of your body's levels of two minerals — calcium and phosphorus.
- Autoimmune disorders including juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, Grave’s Disease, neutropenia, and hemolytic anemia
- Immune deficiencies, chronic ear and respiratory infections

### TESTING AND PROPER DIAGNOSIS OF 22Q IS IMPORTANT FOR MANY REASONS, INCLUDING THE PROPER HEALTH SCREENING AND SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PERSON’S LIFESPAN.

For more information on 22q, please visit these websites:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/digeorge-syndrome/symptoms-causes>; <https://ghr.nhs.nih.gov/condition/22q112-deletion-syndrome>; <https://22qfamilyfoundation.org>; <https://vkc.vanderbilt.edu/etoolkit/physical-health/health-watch-tables-2/22q11-2-deletion-syndrome/>





small shuffling steps, leaning forward, and reduced swinging of the arms.

- There may be many other problems that can be attributed to Parkinson's disease. Some people experience constipation, difficulty with bladder control, swallowing difficulty, sleep problems, and depression.
- In the later stages of the disease, problems with thinking or cognition can occur.

## DIAGNOSIS

Parkinson's disease can be difficult to diagnose. Currently there are no blood tests to make a diagnosis. A person who is suspected of having a neurological disorder is usually referred to a neurologist who will complete a neurological examination and look at the person's medical history. Frequently, brain scans and blood tests may be done in an effort to rule out other diseases.

## TREATMENT

Parkinson's disease is chronic (persists over a long period of time) and progressive (symptoms grow worse over time). Although some people become severely disabled, others may experience only mild symptoms. While there is no cure for Parkinson's disease at this time, medications can provide significant relief from symptoms. The main medication therapy for Parkinson's disease is levodopa, also called L-dopa, which works by increasing the level of dopamine in the brain. There are many other medications that can also be used to help alleviate symptoms of the disease.

Deep brain stimulation may be performed in those who do not respond to medications. This involves surgically implanting electrodes into the brain and connecting them to a small electrical device implanted in the chest. This device stimulates the brain to stop symptoms such as tremor, rigidity, and slowness of movements. Additional therapies such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies can help with ambulation and voice concerns.

A well rounded treatment plan including medications, therapies, exercise, healthy eating, managing stress, and staying socially connected can lead to a fulfilling and productive life for many years.

For more information on Parkinson's disease, see these websites: [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org); [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org); [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org); [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org).



### CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES MENTIONED IN THIS EDITION OF "IT'S YOUR HEALTH"

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/digeorge-syndrome/symptoms-causes>

<https://ghr.nhs.nih.gov/condition/22q112-deletion-syndrome>

<https://22qfamilyfoundation.org>

<https://vkc.vanderbilt.edu/etoolkit/physical-health/health-watch-tables-2/22q11-2-deletion-syndrome/>

[www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)

[www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org)

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

[www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org)

# SLEEP WELL TAKE CARE AND GOOD NIGHT

## GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

Sleep is essential to feeling refreshed and rested, and is an indispensable part of a healthy lifestyle.

The secret to a better night's rest could be changing or reducing the dosage of your medication. Doctors prescribe medications with the best intentions, but many common medications, both prescription and over the counter, can interfere with sleep as a side effect.

Some medications, including those for high blood pressure and asthma, can keep you up all night with insomnia, while others, like cough, cold, and flu medications, can disrupt sleep. Additionally, certain medications, such as antihistamines, can cause daytime drowsiness. In fact, sleepiness is one of the most common side effects of medications.



### MEDICATIONS THAT CAN AFFECT SLEEP INCLUDE:

- Anti-arrhythmics (for heart rhythm problems)
- Beta blockers (for high blood pressure)
- Clonidine (for high blood pressure)
- Corticosteroids (for inflammation or asthma)
- Diuretics (for high blood pressure)
- Cough, cold, and flu medications that contain alcohol
- Headache and pain medications that contain caffeine
- Nicotine replacement products
- Sedating antihistamines (for colds and allergies)
- SSRIs (for depression or anxiety)
- Sympathomimetic stimulants (for attention deficit disorder)
- Theophylline (for asthma)
- Thyroid hormone (for hypothyroidism)

If you suspect that a medication is disrupting your sleep or causing you to feel drowsy during the day, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may be able to switch you to a different one that has a different side effect profile, reduce the dosage of your current prescription, or suggest a different type of treatment altogether so that your sleep isn't affected. For example, if you're taking a medication to lower your blood pressure and it's negatively affecting your sleep somehow, you might consider asking your doctor whether you can drop the medication and replace it with lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, exercising regularly, eating more nutritious foods, reducing your intake of sodium, alcohol, and caffeine, quitting smoking, and/or lowering your stress.

What you *shouldn't* do is attempt to solve the problem on your own. Always discuss the situation in depth with your doctor first, and don't stop taking the medication until you have decided on an alternative treatment. Otherwise, you may experience dangerous side effects (such as uncontrolled asthma, ADD, depression, or anxiety). A physician's guidance can help you evaluate the risks and benefits of a medication.



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## Ideas for Our Newsletter?

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