

Valerian Root Extract

Relax, DeStress, Sleep

by Margy Squires

Stress We all know what it feels like! Whether working to make a deadline, waiting for medical results, or trying to quiet down an over active mind at 3 in the morning, we'd like less of it. Stress costs Americans \$190 million in health care and the U.S. \$300 billion in lost productivity a year. A reported 3 out of 4 doctor visits are for stress related ailments. Compared to 5 years ago, 48% of Americans today feel more stressed and lose sleep over it.

The statistics go on. According to 2014 figures from the American Institute of Stress, it increases your chance of heart disease by 40%, stroke by 50% and heart attack by 25%. Besides lost sleep, stress leads to unhealthy habits like overeating or making poor food choices, decreased exercise and believe it or not, fewer vacations for the working stressed.

Symptoms of stress are vague and include headaches, fatigue, muscle tension, trouble concentrating, sleeplessness, irritability, depression and lethargy. So you may not even recognize how stress impacts your health on a daily basis. Acute stress may cause scary symptoms of shaking and heart palpitations that mimic a heart attack.

Stress is part of life and can rev you up enough to help you deal with issues requiring immediate attention and action on a short term basis. Obviously, we're not dealing with tigers in the jungle threatening our lives. But the fact that so many Americans feel stressed, sleepless and under pressure every day begs the question, *why?*

You'll find a checklist for the top 7 causes of stress in this article. Do you notice a pattern? It is the long term, not the short term, stress that's the problem. Job pressures from an ongoing overload of work. Money woes due to loss of job, retirement or unexpected medical expenses. Dealing with a chronic disease, terminal illness or painful disability that isn't going to go away. The unhealthy, inadequate American diet full of processed foods too high in salt, sugar and fat that both feed and are short of nutrients needed to counter stress chemicals. Use of caffeinated drinks as a source of energy but also boost the adrenal rush.

On the classic stress scale, loss of your spouse, home or job rates high. Have we exchanged the tangible, touchable support system that we lean on with virtual social networking via Facebook, chat rooms and emails? Finally, does the constant bombardment of information from television, radio and internet further shorten our quest for restful sleep? Yes, it's the *cumulative and continuing dynamics* of the seven that make S-T-R-E-S-S such a toxic effect on our lives.

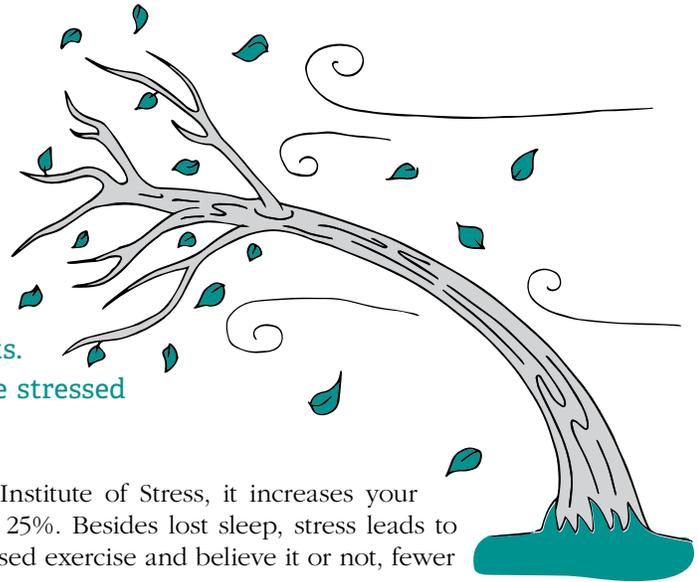


Stress can break us. Learn to bend and lessen the impact. Some things cannot be changed like a permanent disability or loss of a spouse. But if you're retired and not liking it, volunteer or join a social club with members of like-minded skills. Is your diet less than stellar? Make one change to start eating right. At the very least, take a multivitamin mineral complex to get more nutrients in! Cut down on those caffeinated drinks at least 12 hours before bedtime (seriously, that's how long it takes to clear caffeine from your system!). Newer electronics offer lighting that interfere less with sleep, but give yourself an hour break before turning in to relax your mind. And although the Institute did not mention alcohol consumption, for some people it interferes with serotonin, a neurochemical needed to set your body clock mechanism for staying asleep during the night.

Lack of sleep alone is stressful as it contributes to next day fatigue, body pains, memory problems and lower immune function.

Given the named statistics, it seems unlikely anyone is immune to stress at one time or another. And chances are, your healthcare professional may offer a commonly prescribed drug for short term stress or anxiety, a benzodiazepine (BDZ) such as alprazolam, diazepam and lorazepam. BDZs promote relaxation and reduce nervous muscle tension by slowing down the nervous system. However, long term use is discouraged as a higher dose may be needed to achieve the desired result,

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which may lead to tolerance and/or dependence. Side effects of BDZs include trouble concentrating, confusion, headaches, stomach upset and memory problems; in fact, many of the symptoms stress causes.

There is a natural answer to destress, relax and improve sleep. Valerian Root Extract (VRE). Used historically for centuries, the extract from roots of the valerian plant have a calming effect on the nervous system in such a way as to promote relaxation without being dopey, sleepy or grumpy. For that reason, it is safe to take during the day. VRE's safety is illustrated in its use for attention deficit hyperactivity in children that dates back to 1975, allowing the children to learn better in school and they preferred it over the drug alternative. Adults with information overload may welcome the "calm within the storm" benefit when their minds need to "unwind".

Ah, sleep! VRE's action as an antispasmodic helps muscles and nerves relax, making it useful for those painful muscle conditions, restless legs and general anxiousness. At night VRE assists sleep. It reduces nighttime waking, allowing you to get into that deep restorative REM sleep. Plus, there's no morning grogginess when you wake up to interfere with your day. In a 6 week study, VRE was comparable to a BDZ. In fact, post study subjects who took VRE to offset the drug rebound reported "significantly better sleep", suggesting VRE had "a positive effect on withdrawal from BDZ use". Finally, this gentle herb is not habit forming so it's safe for long term use without worrying about withdrawal side effects. Naturopathic Donald Brown, N.D., suggests taking 300-500 mg one hour before bedtime.



Top 7 Causes of Stress

How many stressors do you have?

- Job Pressure
- Money Woes
- Health Issues
- Relationship Situations
- Poor Nutrition
- Media Overload
- Sleep Deprivation

Source: APA & American Institute of Stress

Since VRE is an herb, take the standardized form of 0.8% valerenic acid found effective in research studies. TyH's Valerian Rest™ was formulated after a German study which combined VRE with lemon balm, another herb which quiets the nervous system and stress anxiety. Follow the guidelines on the label for daytime or nighttime use. If pain is part of your stress profile, Valerian Rest™ was part of an effective study for fibromyalgia, an amplified pain syndrome. It also helped those with rheumatoid arthritis sleep better and wake with less morning "stiffness".

Stress is part of life! But you have options with VRE so take advantage of this remarkable herb to help you relax, destress and sleep!

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