

# WELLNESS

## review

### What Would you do if you Faced a Hungry Tiger?

What would you do if you faced a hungry tiger or some other savage beast? Well, thousands of years ago you may have had to deal with this form of stress. To ensure your survival, you would have had to run fast, put up an almighty fight or try to outsmart the hungry beast.

Today, although we don't face hungry tigers trying to make a meal of us, we do face other forms of stress. Today the tiger is in the form of stressors like our boss expecting more from us, relationship stress, family stress and traffic jams, just to name a few. Many of us are so used to feeling stressed, we sometimes don't even recognise how much stress is affecting our health.

#### *Fight it or Run!*

Unfortunately, our body is unable to recognise the difference between a hungry tiger and life stress – whatever the trigger, it responds with the "Fight or Flight" response. This is where the body sends out chemical messengers to allow us to either fight off the stress or run away from it. The brain and adrenal glands secrete adrenaline and noradrenaline and the adrenal glands also secrete cortisol.

These chemicals increase blood flow to the brain, heart, lungs and muscles so that you can run fast! Cortisol also increases the amount of sugar released into your blood so that you can feed those racing muscles. During this time, as reproductive and digestive functions are unimportant, they are suppressed. Once the stress is over these chemical messengers return back to normal and balance is restored. This fight or flight response is not a problem unless it does not switch off, as in the case of chronic stress.

#### *Stress: It's bad for your Health*

The stress response may have been a great adaptation for us hundreds of years ago but unfortunately the effects of chronic stress can impact our health significantly. Chronic ongoing stress can alter the delicate balance within our body. Stress especially affects the heart and cardiovascular system, weakens digestion, depletes energy levels, upsets blood sugar regulation and hormonal balance, and may disturb sleep and mental health. Therefore, we need to manage stress and our response to stressful situations to ensure balance and health.

#### *Rebalance this Natural Process with Natural Medicine*

Fortunately, this clinic has some excellent options to help you manage stress and its consequences. The most important consideration we take into account is that each person reacts to stress

differently. This is why we individualise our approach by using different combinations of well researched nutritional and herbal medicines.

#### *What is your Stress Pattern?*

Herbal medicine may help rebalance specific types of stress patterns and therefore help to support positive stress management. Here are some examples of herbal combinations that may enhance your ability to cope with stress:

- Herbs such as **Panax ginseng**, **Dong Quai**, **Poria** and **Longan** may work in synergy to help those who are prone to worrying and withdrawing when stressed. This non-stimulating formula supports emotional resilience in sensitive people, effectively relieving anxiety and worry while improving mental clarity and boosting the ability to cope with stress.
- **Mate**, **Cocoa** and **Licorice** have been traditionally been used as mental and physical tonics that may help those who become lethargic, apathetic and mentally exhausted when stressed. These are stimulating herbs designed to improve mental performance in those with poor memory and concentration, or for people who are prone to putting things off. If you are mentally exhausted, this combination may provide you with energy and improved mental function.
- **Bupleurum** and **Peony** are herbs traditionally used to relieve symptoms of unrest and tension in people who are irritable, frustrated and impatient under stress. It is particularly useful for pre-menstrual syndrome or menopausal symptoms, and also for irritability and impatience in men.
- When **Bupleurum** and **Calcium** are combined with herbs such as **Pinellia**, **Gambir** and **Ziziphus** they may assist people who have a bad temper when they are stressed. If you react to stress in an irate manner and have a fierce temper, this herbal formula may help you sleep more restfully and respond to stress in a more restrained, calm manner.

#### *Top Five Stress Busters*

As well as these natural medicines, here are some handy solutions to help you deal with stress:

1. Take time out – we all need time to ourselves to help our body recover from stress.
2. Exercise – many studies suggest that regular exercise can help reduce stress levels.
3. Indulge in a massage, reflexology or some other blissful treatment. After all, you deserve it!
4. Use positive visualisation to help lower your stress response. Think of something that makes you feel stressed and visualise yourself in that situation feeling very calm and able to cope.
5. Vaporise some essential oils such as lavender, geranium and chamomile. Not only do they smell great but they can assist with relaxation.

