

**Stress Tip Defining Stress**

Stress certainly impacts us physically, emotionally and has tremendous impact on our sleep patterns. I am always amazed when I teach a class and ask if anyone in the room is having an issue with stress and they all raise their hands. Then I ask the questions: What is Stress? I have always gotten some interesting answers but it became clear years ago that the definition of stress was very confusing. Several years ago I Federally copyrighted a definition that people seem to be able to relate to: Stress is Change; Stressors are the activating event that brings about the Change; and Stress reaction is based on the individual’s perception about the change.

Copyright©2014 Susan Lewis Simons, M.S., B.C.E.T.S., D.A.A.E.T.S.

**Stress Tip: Stress and Magnesium**

Magnesium is extremely important in our bodies but even more so for the Type A Personality and/or Law Enforcement Personality. Remember, Stress is Change and can be 1. Emotional (good or bad: Birth of a child, receiving a letter from the IRS), 2. Environmental; (Imprisonment, bright lights, temperatures), 3. physical;( extreme exercise, hunger, pain) and the body responds to these stressors whether good or bad in nature or perception by producing stress hormones such as adrenaline and or adrenal cortisone thus activating the *freeze, flight or fight response* (in that order unless training over rides this natural order). The body’s response to these hormones causes a sudden rise in Magnesium dependent reactions so our need for Magnesium soars as our bodies respond to stress. During these times Magnesium is mobilized from available sources where our bodies have stored it that are not life maintaining. If Magnesium nutrition has been adequate, the body magnesium stores are sufficient to meet these sudden, usually short-lived, increased needs. BUT if the body’s magnesium stores are too low and stress continues then the stress hormones begin to mobilize magnesium from even the vital tissues such as the heart and the response to acute stress can become dangerous.

In law enforcement, where often there are prolonged stress inducing conditions, the need for magnesium remains abnormally high and even with seemingly adequate magnesium nutrition, the magnesium stores can be exhausted leading to a decreased resistance to chronic or long term stress. It is possible to adapt to chronic stress and everything seems fine for a while. This can even go on for years

but the ability to adapt to stress can diminish causing irreversible harm. Think of it like boiling water in a pan. While maintaining constant heat, the water will remain at a temperature where it will continue to boil. However, over time, if the temperature (stress) is not lowered and or more water (Magnesium) is added, eventually the pan will boil dry. When this occurs depends on how much water is in the pan and just how hot the temperature remains. **BE AWARE: In taking Magnesium supplements, TOO much can cause DIARRHEA!!! (Milk of Magnesia)! Next week I will discuss the ways to determine your levels and how much to take.**

The mistake many departments make is in believing that stress levels are completely up to the individual when in reality there are many stressors we cannot alter such as noise, weather, traffic, politics in the workplace etc. Individuals can only control how they respond to these stressors bringing us back to the definition of stress reaction which is determined by the individual’s perception about the stress.

Laughter, even sick humor (just don’t use it in front of the victim or victim’s family, media etc) is one of the most useful tools for law enforcement in warding off the negative effects of stress and reducing the bodies need for magnesium continuously to the point of depletion.

\* The Magnesium Factor by Mildred S. Seelig, M.D., MPH Master, American College of Nutrition and Andrea Rosanoff, Ph.D.

Copyright©2014 Susan Lewis Simons, M.S., B.C.E.T.S., D.A.A.E.T.S.

Susan Simons with [Under The Shield, Inc.](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Under-The-Shield-Inc/313483972954?ref=hl&directed_target_id=0)'s **TIP OF THE WEEK**: This is probably one of the overall top tips I have provided to law enforcement and military around world where I have received the most positive feedback. How many of you suffer from any of these symptoms? 1.) Mild depression 2.) Loss of energy 3.) Irritability 4.) Sleep pattern changes 5.) Eating pattern changes 6.) Inability to concentrate. With these symptoms your doctor would most likely prescribe a form of antidepressant in the SSRI and/or SNRI family. These can be very useful drugs however I do not believe in going straight to prescription solutions because all too often these are actually symptoms of a vitamin B deficiency. Several things you need to know about vitamin Bs. You never take just B6 or B12. The vitamin Bs need each other to fully metabolize in your system. The next thing is be very careful to read labels and make sure that the vitamin B you take has B12 with the word Methylcobalamin and not the Cyanocobalamin (Cyanide). If there is nothing behind the B12 on the label it is Cyanocobalamin. You will be surprised at how many things we consume are made with the Cyanocobalamin mainly because it is cheaper. 5 Hour energy is loaded with it as are any of the energy drinks. The bottle on the vitamin B will usually tell you to take one a day. Because these are water soluble vitamins you need to take them 3 times a day with your last dose being taken WHEN YOU GET IN THE BED (whatever time that is for you). You will metabolize these in your sleep, energy stores and it will give you a boost at the beginning of your day (again whatever time that is for you). This is also another tip for reaching REM sleep and a very important one. Be aware that because this is a water soluble vitamin you cannot hit a toxic level like some other vitamins. Your urine should turn bright yellow if you are taking enough of it. What this is telling you is that your body is absorbing what it needs and eliminating the rest. If you are not eliminating any, no way to know if you are getting enough. Do NOT spend a lot of money on this vitamin because you will be flushing some of it down the toilet. According to Psychology Today, Chicago Researchers at the Rush Institute for Healthy Aging believe all the Bs play a critical role in brain function, from manufacturing neurotransmitters to regulating energy release in brain cells. B3, Niacin seems to have a particularly potent role in maintaining mental agility, regenerating brain cells and may protect against the mental ravages of age--Alzheimer's disease and the cognitive decline associated with aging. This alone is a great reason to make sure you are getting your vitamin Bs on a daily basis. For those in high stress jobs like Law Enforcement, Military etc it is impossible to achieve this goal through diet alone. Have a great week and stay safe!!!

Copyright©2014 Susan Lewis Simons, M.S., B.C.E.T.S., D.A.A.E.T.S.