

Don't let small everyday things bring you down

In times when you're stressed in general, small everyday stresses can feel overwhelming. This doesn't mean that anything is wrong with you. This is normal, but also not good for your mental health. So how does stress work, what does it do to your body, and what can you do manage these feelings?

You don't have to take all stresses equally seriously

In an article for Success.com, physical therapist Andrew Banh reveals that "excessive focus on small problems compounds a vicious cycle of fear, stress and worry". Banh explains that all the stresses and challenges you face are not equally serious. You don't have to give the same attention to all your problems.

In an article for *Psychology Today*, Karyn Hall asks "Do you spend most of your time with what is important to you or what others want you to do?" Think about what's important to you and then decide what you should pay the most attention to.

Worrying about small stresses adds up

A study done by Oregon State University shows that even small stressors can affect your health and wellbeing. "It's not the number of hassles that does you in, it's the perception of them being a big deal that causes problems," says Carolyn Aldwin, director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research. "Taking things in your stride may protect you."

What you can do to relax a little

Here are three things you can do to lessen the effects of stress:

- **Get enough sleep.** If you don't get a good night's rest, you will probably feel more stressed and react more strongly to things that cause you stress. You'll probably sleep better if you avoid caffeine after noon, put your cellphone away about an hour before sleeping, and going to bed at roughly the same time each night.
- **Add structure to your day.** Do this by taking your lunch break each day, planning your workflow, and setting realistic goals.
- **Reach out when stress starts adding up.** If you feel you're reacting too strongly to small stresses, ask other people to help you and speak to your GP.

You will always have some stress. In fact, a little bit of stress can be good for you. So instead of trying to get rid of all your stress, try to learn better ways to cope with the stress you have.

Your cover if stress leads to a depressive episode

Our Mental Health Care Programme gives tools and additional cover so you and your Premier Plus GP can manage episodes of major depression. The programme offers you tools and we pay for certain benefits without using the money in your Medical Savings Account. You can find a Premier Plus GP by logging in to www.engenmed.co.za.

If you qualify and your Premier Plus GP registers you for our Mental Health Care Programme, we cover the following benefits, spread out over six months:

- Three visits to your Premier Plus GP
- If your Premier Plus GP refers you, one session with a psychologist for talk therapy
- Antidepressant medicine of up to R160.00 a month

You can contact us on 0800 00 16 15 or visit www.engenmed.co.za for more information.