

Google search: what chemical is released when you are stressed?

Cortisol!

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**Cortisol**, the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol also limits functions that would be unneeded or harmful in a fight-or-flight situation.

It alters immune system responses and suppresses the digestive system, the reproductive system and growth processes. This complex natural alarm system also communicates with the brain regions that control mood, motivation and fear.

The long-term activation of the stress response system and the overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones that follows can disrupt almost all your body's processes. This puts you at increased risk of many health problems, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Muscle tension and pain
- Heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure and stroke
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

Stress management strategies include:

- Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise and getting plenty of sleep
- Practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga, deep breathing, massage or meditation
- Keeping a journal and writing about your thoughts or what you're grateful for in your life
- Taking time for hobbies, such as reading, listening to music, or watching your favorite show or movie
- Fostering healthy friendships and talking with friends and family
- Having a sense of humor and finding ways to include humor and laughter in your life, such as watching funny movies or looking at joke websites
- Volunteering in your community
- Organizing and prioritizing what you need to accomplish at home and work and removing tasks that aren't necessary

- Seeking professional counseling, which can help you develop specific coping strategies to manage stress