

# Impact of Stress on Females During Pregnancy



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## Abstract

The present paper attempts to explore the impact of stress on day –today life of common people especially pregnant women. Severe effect of stress has the power to shatter the person into pieces. It hampers and reduces the functioning of body organs. Negative effect of stress on hair, brain, mouth, heart, lungs, muscles, digestive tract, skin and reproductive organs are discussed in the paper. Stress in females when they are pregnant bring various negative outcomes e.g. premature birth of baby, low physical & mental growth of baby, mentally retarded babies, babies born with cerebral palsy or even resulted in miscarriages. Stressed out men have also been found to be behind recurrent miscarriage of their wives. Some stress reduction techniques are discussed in the paper which is helpful for mothers-to-be to cope with stress. Relaxation Response, Cognitive Restricting, Taking professional help, good support network and adopting relaxed lifestyle are discussed in the paper.

## Introduction:

Stress is an emotional and physical reaction to changes. Stress is defined as the adverse relation of the people to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them (parry, 2005). Nowadays Stress has become an inevitable part of life which disrupts individuals' normal state of well being. These influences are capable of affecting health by causing emotional distress and leading to a variety of physiological changes. Stress occurs when pressure exceeds his or her perceived ability to cope (centre for stress management, 2004). Stress can also be defined as a process in which adaptive capacity results in both physiological as well as biological changes that could place in a person (Cohen, et al. 1995).

Causes of stress may vary from person to person. Some common causes of stress can be a death, an illness or injury of one's family member. Apart from these, there are various ways of arousal of stress for e.g. - relationship changes, work or job changes, loss of money, divorce, a term in jail, retirement, reconciliation in a marriage etc.

Stress can be positive and gives energy. Positive stress can help children and adults develop the skills they need to cope with and adapt to new and potentially threatening situations throughout life. It can be called as healthy stress. Stress can be unhealthy when it affects the individual's health. When a high level of stress continues for a long period, it may contribute to potentially serious health problems, such as lowered resistance to infections, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, arthritis.

Common signs of stress are-

- Feeling nervous,
- Sad or angry,
- Fast pounding heartbeat,
- Sweating,
- Pain or tense muscles in the neck, shoulders and back,
- Headache
- Feeling tired or having trouble in sleeping,
- Constipation or diarrhoea,
- Lack of appetite or weight loss.

Negative stress is of two types- Tolerable and Toxic stress.

Tolerable stress- is adverse experiences that are more intense but still relatively short lived. It includes the death of a loved