



Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

The problem with stress

To say we're all carrying a little more stress around would be an understatement. Whether it's the anxiety at the grocery store when seeing a conga line of other carts coming toward us, fear of germs on the takeout box, or watching the nightly news with its infatuation with death and disease, it's not an easy situation to handle.

As many sit under the COVID-19 cloud low levels of stress are actually controlling thoughts, actions, and reactions. The body, mind, and soul all take stress in and process it in different ways.

Stress to the body is a signal — a signal is associated with a few chemicals and hormones. Glucocorticosteroids are the class of chemicals that are released under stress. Whether this is the stress of seeing the market crash, or the stress of actually taking a crash, the body knows no difference. The chemicals are the same.

These chemicals produce acute adaptations within the body. Cortisol and epinephrine are released. They tighten down blood vessels, slow digestion, and shut down other unnecessary tasks in order to be ready to dart away from danger. This is an evolutionary response. No one is running away from their TV when a scary politician makes a political

statement; this is largely an overreaction because legitimate danger isn't present.

Part of the problem is also how stress affects the mind. The chemicals hijack our rational mind, predominately by deregulating the prefrontal cortex (the rationality center of the brain) and amygdala (which processes fear and reactions). With these two areas under stress, a person begins to make snap judgments. They are more moody, less empathetic, and trend towards irrational thoughts. It is said that under stress, people take bigger risks: they gamble more, and they judge circumstances as far more threatening than they may actually be.

These chemicals also take their toll on the body. First, stress dumps insulin into the bloodstream. This gives a high blood sugar response followed by a crash. Upon the crash, the body craves sweets, and snacks to try and rebound. It's easy to see how the snacking-and-binging process can be initiated. The blood vessels being constricted causes high blood pressure; this makes it a lot easier for heart disease to take its victims. Tense muscles lead to aches and pains.

There are reasons to be stressed; everyone has the same list right now. There are, however, a lot of irrational, and sensational fears being propagated. Separate the things you can control, and the things that you can't. Taking time to enjoy the beautiful world around us, without news flashes and conversations with the neighbor that turns into a who's-more-worried battle can help. Try breathing exercises, an enjoyable book, cooking, and crafting. All are ways to reduce stress. Exercise and diet play a role; keep the body healthy and the mind and spirit will follow.

Above all else, know how little worrying is going to help, and that enjoying the ride will be the only way to get through.



PHOTO COURTESY BARRAGE STUDIOS

A hiker injured by an accident with a machete had to be airlifted out of the forest west of Camp Sherman.

Machete injury forces rescue

A man injured himself when he struck himself in the leg with a machete while hiking in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness Area north west of Camp Sherman on Saturday evening.

The 28-year-old hiker called 911 at about 7:08 p.m. The man was traveling with a companion and his fellow hiker immediately wrapped the wound and they began hiking out, but were a couple miles from the trailhead.

Jefferson County Deputies and search and rescue (SAR) personnel from the Camp Sherman Hasty Team responded to the scene along with medics from the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Department, an OSP Trooper, and a Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer.

The man walked as far as he could and met the first arriving units on the trail who provided advanced

medical care. A wheeled litter was hiked in and the man was transported to a waiting ambulance at the trailhead. He transported about a half mile by ground ambulance to a waiting Air Life Helicopter who transported him to St. Charles Bend at about 10:15 p.m.

The Jefferson County

Sheriff's Office thanked all those involved with the rescue and reminded the public that SAR assets are stressed during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

"We ask people to please be extra cautious during this time and to choose where they go wisely," the department stated in a release.

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