



STRESS: THE INVISIBLE EPIDEMIC

Antibiotics can't touch it. The microscope can't even spot it. It's rapidly spreading, and almost everybody's feeling the effect.

Stress is the hot word these days.

Most people seem to agree that these are high pressure times. Employees complain of being burned out. Used up. Overloaded. Too many of us are just plain tired, overdosed on change, sick of ambiguity and uncertainty.

And if *today's* stress and tension aren't enough to create problems, all a person has to do is consider what the *future* holds. One close look at what's in store should be enough to worry anyone.

Actually today is just a warmup. Tomorrow promises us an even more complex world, a still faster rate of change, and—unless we learn to handle life better—more stress than we ever dreamed of. These soon will be remembered as “the good old days.”

Most of us just wish that change would go away. Or at least slow down. When it doesn't, we look around for someone to blame it on, or for someone we think should be responsible for relieving our stress.

But since higher management has its hands full these days, we're probably not going to get much emotional hand-holding from those folks. We also can't count on the world giving us much of a breather. What we can do, though, is be a lot more clever in the way we manage our own behavior.

Instead of behaving in ways that actually create stress for ourselves, let's get better at adapting. If we can't change the situation, we can at least make big changes in the way we handle it.