

Why Stress Matters for Your Heart

Stress is a natural response to life's challenges, but when it becomes a constant part of daily life, it can seriously impact your health. When you feel under pressure, your body releases stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. These chemicals trigger the 'fight or flight' response, causing your heart rate to speed up, your blood vessels to constrict, and your blood pressure to rise. Over time, chronic stress can lead to high blood pressure, unhealthy coping habits, and an increased risk of heart disease, heart attack, or stroke.

Recognising the Signs

The effects of stress on heart health can appear gradually. Look out for symptoms such as:

- Frequent headaches, jaw clenching, or muscle tension
- A racing heart or palpitations during stressful moments
- Poor sleep or ongoing fatigue
- Feeling unusually irritable or anxious

Reducing Stress and Protecting Your Heart

The good news is that small, consistent steps can help lower stress hormones and protect your heart.

At Work: Take short breaks, manage workloads realistically, and discuss pressure points with managers.

At Home: Include gentle exercise like walking, practice mindfulness, reduce caffeine and alcohol, and keep a consistent sleep routine.

The Role Employers Can Play

Workplace stress is a major contributor to poor cardiovascular health. Employers can help by fostering open communication, promoting healthy habits, offering flexibility, and ensuring access to occupational health services. Addressing stress early not only protects employee health but also boosts engagement and productivity.

When to Seek Help

Seek professional advice if you or your employees experience chest pain, palpitations, dizziness, severe fatigue, persistent anxiety, or sudden changes in sleep, appetite, or behaviour. Early intervention can prevent stress from escalating into serious heart health issues.

How Insight Workplace Health Can Help

We provide stress risk assessments, confidential consultations, and guidance for managers to support their teams effectively. This World Heart Day, make stress management a priority — your heart will thank you.