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Job stress is not an excuse to gain weight

By Mitch Felipe
Philippine Daily Inquirer
First Posted 21:26:00 03/30/2009

 Filed Under: [Lifestyle & Leisure](#), [Health](#)

THE MOST STRESSFUL SITUATIONS are often encountered at work. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, one experiences stress when the requirements of a [job](#) do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of a worker.

I have recently interviewed employees from a top company about job-related health problems. Reasons include food availability, lack of physical activities and response to work demand, deadlines, quota and performance status. Most of the employees resort to eating in order to handle stress, feel better, reward their efforts and lessen anxiety.

Dr. Pamela Peeke, a renowned clinician and scientist, explains in her book, "Fight Fat after Forty," three types of stress-eating profiles.

Stress resilient cope well under stress. They don't use food as reward or punishment. Their fitness level matches their age and eating behavior is healthy.

Stress overeaters eat until they feel sick. They usually oversleep and have a hard time doing exercise.

Stress undereaters have the biological instinct to reject food. Their fitness level is average to high, which explains why they experience depression in the absence of exercise. Anorexics are classified under this profile.

Manage stress eating

Write a food journal and analyze high-calorie foods you usually look for. Bring healthier food alternatives to work, like low-fat yogurt, cheeses, fruits, wheat crackers or bread with low-calorie spread or jam.

The book "Stress Eater Diet" by Robert Posner and Linda Hlivka recommends food which contain stress-reducing components: red meat, turkey, banana, nuts, green leafy vegetables, broccoli, beans, tuna, whole grains, tofu, cheese, yogurt, eggs, chili peppers and those which contain tryptophan, B vitamins, magnesium, selenium and Vitamin B5.

According to a study in the Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, exercise must be enjoyable, void of interpersonal competition and repetitive to effectively reduce stress.

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