

# BEING BLACK IS AN UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITION CONTRIBUTING TO PREVENTABLE PREMATURE DEATH IN THE U.S.

Health disparities are not normal. They are generally caused by chronic exposure to:

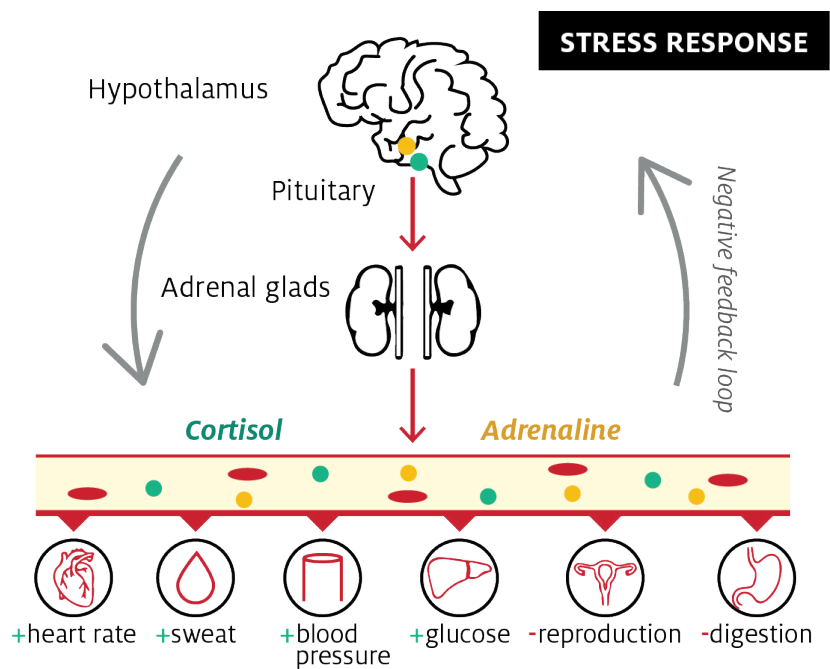
- Stress
- Racism/discrimination/microaggressions
- Violence
- Poverty
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Unequal access to health care
- Substandard access to quality education
- Substandard housing
- Inadequate green space and sidewalks
- Food insecurity and diet

Warning signs of acute stress include challenges with:

- Anger
- Appetite
- Chest pain
- Concentration
- Fatigue
- Fear
- Hair loss
- Headaches
- Heart pounding
- Immune system
- Loss of interests
- Muscle tension
- Nervousness
- Sadness
- Self-esteem
- Shaking
- Sleeping
- Sweating

Chronic exposure to stress will lead to a dysregulated Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis, our primary human response to stress. An activated HPA axis fuels a fight-or-flight response by:

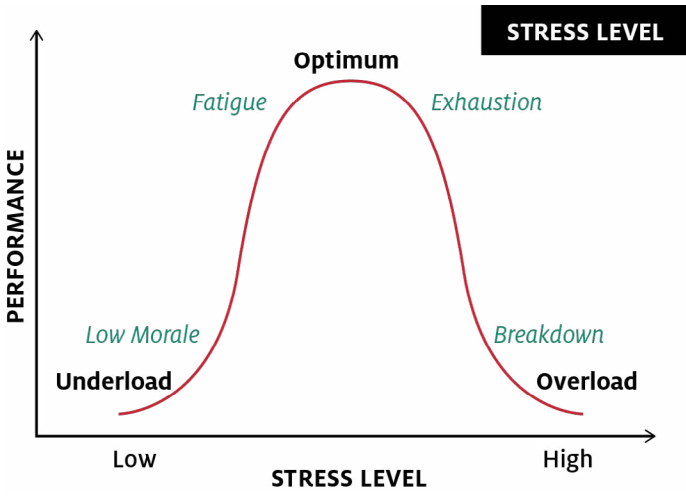
- Increasing adrenalin
- Increasing heart rate
- Increasing sweating
- Increasing blood pressure
- Supplying blood to your skeletal muscles
- Increasing circulating glucose
- Reducing reproductive capacity
- Suppressing immune response – thus increasing susceptibility to infection
- Suppressing digestion





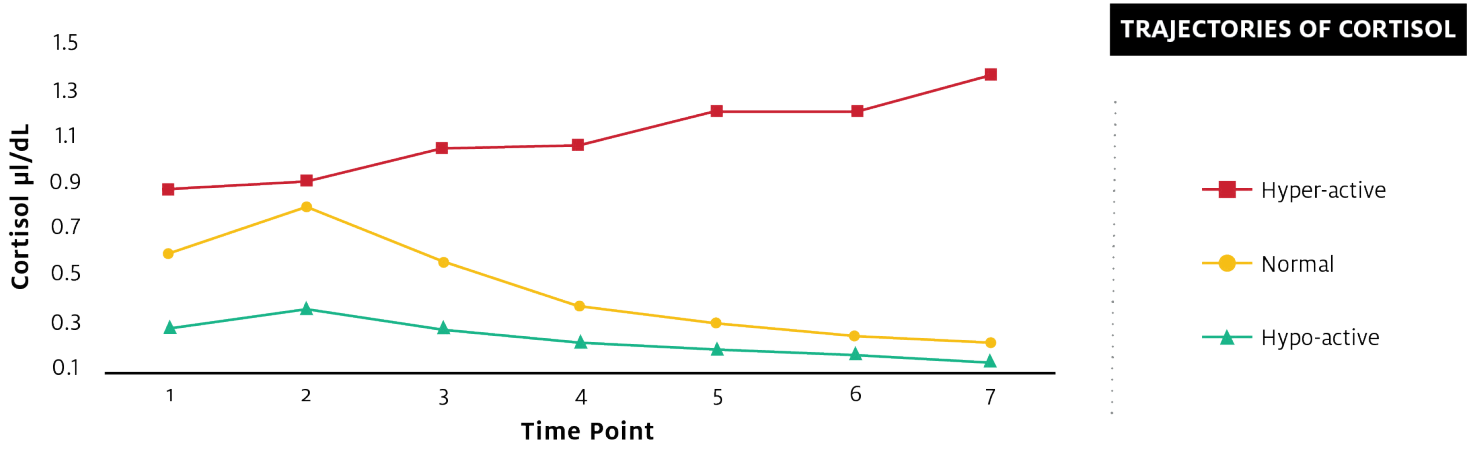
# HEALTH Research Institute

Helping Everyone Achieve a LifeTime of Health



A dysregulated HPA axis is causally linked to increased incidences of:

- Poor mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD)
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Poor sleep hygiene (incl., insomnia)
- Inadequate defense against infections
- Obesity
- Type-2 diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Hypertension
- High cholesterol
- Cancer



**Op-Ed: We shouldn't want to return to normal after COVID-19. Let's invest in everyone's health. "I have no interest in an old or new normal where health disparities are normalized, and where victims are routinely blamed for the disproportionate burdens they shoulder." - Dr. Ezemenari M. Obasi**

## Contact Us

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