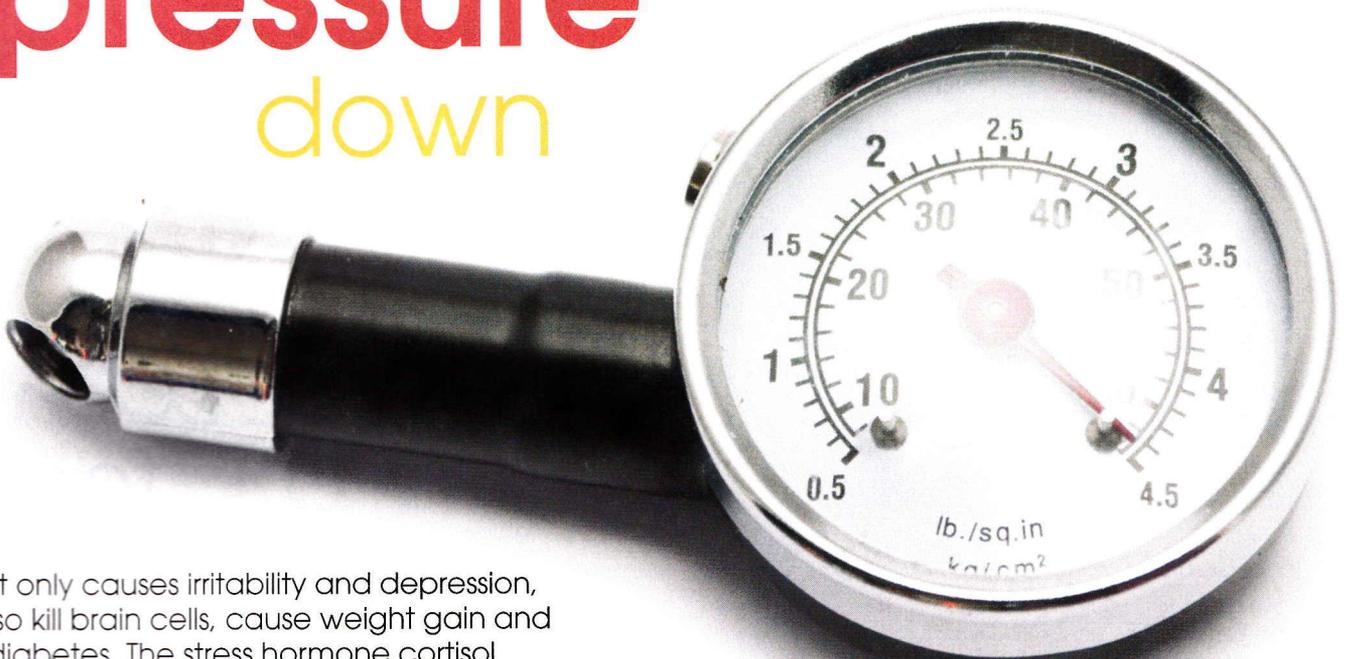


# Take the pressure down



Stress not only causes irritability and depression, it can also kill brain cells, cause weight gain and induce diabetes. The stress hormone cortisol is the culprit...

words | lyn craven

## The stress hormone

Often called the “stress hormone” due to levels increasing after physical and emotional stress, cortisol is secreted by the adrenal glands. If left unchecked prolonged stress can result in high levels of cortisol, when this happens the levels can become toxic and begin to kill brain cells – this is the reason brain shrinkage and senility is associated with old age. Cortisol in excess amounts can also affect your immune system, cause a decrease in muscle mass, shrinkage of vital organs and thinning of the skin.

## Importance of cortisol

Cortisol is more than just an indicator of stress levels, it is necessary for the regulation of the body's use of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, stemming inflammation, along with blood pressure and cardiovascular function. If the body produces too much cortisol over a long period of time it can disrupt your blood sugar metabolism, contributing to high insulin levels and ultimately diabetes, which in turn triggers emotional problems as you feel constantly tired and weak. Chronic elevated cortisol levels can lead to weight gain (abdominal

fat, which is hard to get rid of), muscle and joint pain, insomnia, premature ageing and impaired immune function.

## Don't worry, be happy

Cortisol levels are affected on a daily basis by your attitude and approach to life. Learning to deal with stress in a positive manner is essential to maintain optimum health and

glands so you can better cope with the roller coaster of life. Supplements, which assist with adrenal, nerve, pancreatic function, stabilising insulin and enabling you to manage blood sugar levels, are recommended depending on lifestyle and dietary needs. A professional assessment with a qualified naturopath is a must rather than self-administering remedies. Homoeopathics and herbal remedies, which

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prevent premature ageing. The key here is to learn how to relax, manage stress and ensure you have a healthy diet with adequate restful sleep, ideally seven to eight hours a night. Meditation is also an excellent healing tool – deeply relaxing, it helps to relieve anxiousness, irritability and depression.

## Natural healing

Naturopathically we can support and strengthen the nervous system and adrena

are often comprised of minerals or organ tissue that feed and nourish the endocrine, nervous system and pancreas, are formulated with supporting nutritional supplements to restore the biochemistry of the body.

Lyn Craven | 0403 231 804

lynraven@bigpond.com  
facebook.com/NaturopathandBowenTherapy  
[www.lyncravencorporatehealth-naturopath.com](http://www.lyncravencorporatehealth-naturopath.com)