**UNIT 7** **Is Stress Good or Bad?**

**1. Warm-up**

What situations cause you stress? Do you consider stress as positive or negative?

**2. Medical words and expressions**

**Match the expressions on the left with their definitions on the right.**

1. the immune system a. a branch of medicine for or relating to old people

2. geriatric medicine b. a disease in which a person’s joints become painful and stiff

3. arthritis c. a disease in which cells in the body grow in an uncontrolled way

4. cancer d. a medical operation

5. heart disease e. the body’s ability to protect itself against infection

6. exhaustion f. the speed with which a person’s heart beats

7. surgery g. the state of being extremely tired

8. heart rate h. when blood containing oxygen cannot reach the heart

**3. Decide if the following statements are true or false and read the text quickly to check your answers:**

1. Most people believe that stress is bad.

2. People with less stressful lives live longer.

3. Stress can help to prevent cancer.

4. Stressed people have worse memories.

5. All types of stress are bad for your health.

6. Most people know when they feel stress.

**Worry more, live longer**

**Stress may not be the one-way ticket to an early grave that most of us assume. In fact, it could benefit the immune system and even prevent cancers.**

By Kate Hilpern

1. Dr Marios Kyriazis, a GP and expert in geriatric medicine, is among a growing number of health professionals claiming that stress isn’t the one-way road to illness and an early grave that most of us assume. In fact, if it’s relatively short-term, it appears that stress can benefit the immune system and ageing process. In addition, it can prevent diseases such as Alzheimer’s, arthritis and certain cancers.

2. "We tend to blame stress for everything from exhaustion to bad moods to heart disease, but it’s all a myth. Contrary to popular belief, stress is vital for survival. I advise people to seek out stress because it can make you live longer. It’s people who have routine, uncomplicated, unchallenging lives that tend to be harder hit by ill-health," explains Kyriazis, who is president of the British Longevity Society and author of the book Anti-Ageing Medicines.

3. It’s the degree of stress that is important. "Research indicates that mild and moderate stress benefits the body by increasing the production of special proteins that nourish brain cells," he says.

4. In particular, short-term stress benefits your memory and can even protect against diseases such as Alzheimer’s, says Kyriazis. Some research also suggests stress may help to prevent breast cancer. Meanwhile, another study found that people who experience moderate levels of stress before surgery had a better recovery than those with high or low levels.

5. Research by Texas University even revealed that people who spent most of their lives in undemanding jobs had a 43 per cent risk of dying prematurely - indicating that a regular amount of pressure at work could keep the doctors away.

6. "If you think about it, all this is entirely logical. If your body is stressed, it is stimulated and therefore continually has its immune system tested and provoked, which strengthens it," says Kyriazis.

7. The general advice on recognising good stress from bad is asking yourself whether you feel a sense of accomplishment or excitement either during or afterwards. An overwhelming feeling, on the other hand, generally points to bad stress. If stress continues longer than 24 hours, it can also start to spoil the good benefits of stress.

8. Anne Phillips, a health psychologist, is sceptical, though, about whether people are really aware that they are stressed. "When we get people to do calculations under a time pressure, some participants say they found it really stressful and yet we don’t find much of a reaction. Others say they felt relatively unstressed and yet their heart rate was up by 20 beats a minute."

9. It wouldn’t be fair to ignore the studies that suggest short-term stress can precipitate severe illness and even sudden death. Increases in the number of victims of heart attacks were recorded after earthquakes hit California, Greece and Japan and during military conflicts.

10. Dr John MacLeod, a GP and reader at Bristol University, is certainly unconvinced there is a proven link with stress. One of his studies - of 5,600 men in 27 workplaces in Scotland - found a lower rate of heart disease and death overall in those most likely to say their lives were stressful.

**4. Answer the following questions:**

1. What typical negative effects do people blame stress for?

2. What are the possible benefits of stress mentioned in the article?

3. Who are more likely to suffer from health problems, according to Dr Kyriazis?

4. How can somebody recognize good stress from bad stress?

5. What evidence mentioned in the article contradicts the idea that short-term stress is healthy?

**5. Read the text again and find the words which mean:**

1. dying young

2. necessary, extremely important

3. too soon, before the natural expected time

4. very large or intense

5. destroy, reduce the good effects of something

**6. Match the words on the left with expressions on the right to form appropriate phrases:**

1. prevent an illness (= to say that stress is responsible)

2. blame brain cells (= to stop diseases from happening)

3. nourish diseases (= to suddenly cause an illness to start)

4. precipitate stress (= to provide brain cells with what they need to grow and stay healthy)

**7. Grammar - Emphatic structures**

**Study the following examples (1-2) from the text and decide how they differ from the sentences (a-b):**

1. It’s the degree of stress that is important.

2. It’s people who have routine, uncomplicated, unchallenging lives that tend to be harder hit by

ill-health.

a. The degree of stress is important.

b. People who have routine, uncomplicated, unchallenging lives tend to be harder hit by ill-health.

Rewrite the following sentences emphasizing the noun or phrase in bold:

1. The neighbours brought the boy to the hospital and saved his life.

2. Heart disease is often caused by high levels of cholesterol in the blood.

3. Paolo’s main problem is lack of exercise.

4. Rising unemployment might have serious economic and social consequences.

5. Tom broke a window, not a table.

6. Eric’s doctor didn’t advise him to take the day off work.

**8. Linking words and phrases**

1. **Talking in general:** generally
2. **Saying that something is the opposite of what is considered to be true:** in fact, contrary to popular belief
3. **Making a contrast with what was said before:** on the other hand, though
4. **Giving an additional point:** in addition
5. **Giving an example:** in particular

**Add the following expressions to the items above:**

Actually, for instance, furthermore, however, on the whole, overall

**Complete the following text with suitable words and phrases:**

**The health benefits of green tea**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_1, green tea is not made from a different plant than traditional tea. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2, it is made from the same plant as normal, black tea, but the leaves are preserved by steaming them.

The health benefits of green tea have been known to the Chinese since ancient times. It has been used to treat a variety of illnesses and conditions, including infections, headaches and depression. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3, many people believe these medical benefits are a myth. Recently, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4, there has been increasing scientific evidence which proves that green tea is indeed very healthy. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_5, it has been found to have a high level of anti-oxidants, substances which help the body fight illness. 6, there is research indicating that the drink lowers total cholesterol levels. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_7, researchers from the University of Purdue in the USA, concluded that a compound in green tea inhibits the growth of cancer cells. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_8, the FDA (the US Food and Drug Administration) stated that there was little credible evidence to support the claim that green tea can prevent cancers.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_9, we can say that if only half of the reported medical benefits are true, drinking green tea is very healthy, and it is recommended that humans drink as many as 3-4 cups of it a day.

**9. Talking point**

Which serious illnesses are common in your country? What are the typical reasons for this – lifestyle / climate / pollution etc.?