

## Appendix N: How Vulnerable are You to Stress?

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Susceptibility Scale from the Personal Stress Navigator™ by Lyle H. Miller, Ph.D. and Alma Dell Smith, Ph.D.

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Most people can't avoid stress in our society. However, one can learn to behave in ways that lessen the effects of stress. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's vulnerability to stress – among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how individuals express their emotions. The following self-administered questionnaire is designed to help individuals discover their vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots.

**Scoring:** Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true. Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply – for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

The following test was developed by psychologists Lyle H. Miller, Ph.D. and Alma Dell Smith, Ph.D.

	Always		Sometimes		Never
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcohol drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5

## Nursing Management of Hypertension

	Always		Sometimes		Never
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems – for example, chores and money.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or other caffeine-rich drinks) a day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I have an optimistic outlook on life.	1	2	3	4	5

To calculate your score, add up your score and subtract 20. A score below 10 indicates excellent resistance to stress. A score over 30 indicates some vulnerability to stress; you are seriously vulnerable if your score is over 50. You can make yourself less vulnerable by reviewing the items on which you scored three or higher and trying to modify them. Notice that nearly all of them describe situations and behaviours over which you have a great deal of control. Concentrate first on those that are easiest to change – for example, eating a hot, balanced meal daily and having fun at least once a week – before tackling those that seem difficult.

*Appendix Q* provides additional information about resources available to help individuals identify and manage their stress.