A young actress is about to go onto the stage. As she waits by the side of the stage, she looks **nervous**. You might hear her whisper to her friend, "I've got butterflies in my stomach." Butterflies in her stomach? How did those get in there? The feeling of butterflies comes from **chemicals** produced by the body in **stressful situations**.

One chemical that the body makes under stress is cortisol. This chemical benefits the body in normal situations. In fact, it helps the body start normal activities in the morning after waking up. It also plays a role in helping the body and mind **respond** well to healthy exercise. However, when the body is under stress, extra cortisol begins to affect the stomach. For some people, cortisol shuts down the stomach, producing the funny feeling of butterflies. For others, cortisol **speeds up** the way the stomach works, which makes these people feel sick.

All you need to do to get rid of a few butterflies in the stomach is just relax. Laughing with, or talking to, others about your stress can help reduce it. Stepping out onto the stage will also help those butterflies fly away.



Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of this reading?
   a. A new kind of medicine called cortisol
   b. An illness that nervous people get
   c. The cause of butterflies in the stomach
   d. The stress that actors have

2. According to the reading, what is NOT true about cortisol?
   a. In small amounts, it benefits the body.
   b. It can shut down the stomach.
   c. It is found in many kinds of food.
   d. It is produced by the body.

3. What helps a body respond well to exercise?
   a. Butterflies
   b. Cortisol
   c. Stomach acid
   d. Stress

4. According to the passage, what makes some people feel sick?
   a. When situations return to normal
   b. When the stomach shuts down
   c. When the stomach works too fast
   d. When there is too little cortisol

5. Which may help a person get over butterflies in the stomach?
   a. Doing the thing that makes him or her nervous
   b. Not talking while the butterflies are there
   c. Shutting down his or her stomach for some time
   d. Taking a small amount of cortisol

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