

Stress Management: Brief Version

Why manage stress?

Stress is a part of life. You can't avoid it, but you can change the way you handle it. If you don't handle stress in a healthy way, you are more likely to have health problems.

Stress can harm your body, your relationships, and how well you do at work or school. You can learn ways to manage stress so that it does less harm.

What causes stress?

Going to school, starting a new job, marrying, raising a family, being promoted, and growing old can all cause stress. Stress can also come from floods, money problems, or a death in your family.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of stress can vary for each person. Here are some things to watch for:

- You have less energy.
- You eat more or less than normal.
- You drink more alcohol, smoke more, or use drugs more often.
- You have to go to the bathroom more often or less often than normal.
- You have back pain, headache, or stomach ache.
- You have trouble sleeping.
- You feel nervous or angry more often.
- You have trouble focusing or remembering things.

How is it treated?

Therapy may offer support and help reduce fears and worries. Medicine may help you cope with stress. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress.

Learning to relax can:

- Help you sleep better
- Take your mind off what is bothering you
- Help lower your heart rate and blood pressure, and make you less tense

Ways to relax include:

- Focus on taking slow deep breaths
- Picture yourself in a calm place and let your muscles relax
- Focus only on the present, without judging
- Tense and relax your body, one muscle group at a time

How can I take care of myself?

Take care of yourself by looking at ways you deal with stress. Then try to find healthier ways.

There are many things you can do to help reduce the effects of stress on your life. You can:

- Exercise the way your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Do something just for yourself. Get a new haircut or a massage.
- Look at what upsets you. Try not to worry about things you can't control.
- Learn ways to relax. Talk with people who support you. Listen to music. Watch movies. Take walks. Breathe deeply. Picture pleasant things in your mind.
- Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink less coffee and alcohol.
- Simplify your life. Don't try to do too much. Set goals you can achieve. Learn to say no.
- See a therapist when you have a lot of stress in your life.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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