

Take Control of Stress



Stress is what we feel when the demands on us are greater than we can comfortably manage. It makes it hard to stay focused on what's important. By learning how to control your stress, you can stay focused on being healthy.

Identify sources of stress. Are you being stressed by:

- ▶ A busy schedule?
- ▶ Diabetes or other medical issues?
- ▶ Barriers to meeting your physical activity or eating goals?
- ▶ Family or friends?
- ▶ School or work?
- ▶ A new activity you are trying to learn?
- ▶ A change in your responsibilities?
- ▶ Other problems?

Understand it. Think about how stress affects:

- ▶ Your eating and physical activity habits
- ▶ Your body
- ▶ Your emotions
- ▶ Your relationships
- ▶ Your schoolwork or job

Try to decrease it. Set healthy goals for yourself.

For example, promise yourself that you will:

- ▶ Try to avoid last minute stress by planning ahead.
- ▶ Be careful not to schedule too many activities. Schedule some breaks.
- ▶ Carry healthy snacks to eat when you are away from home.
- ▶ Complete your schoolwork before doing other things you would like to do.
- ▶ Eat healthy – limit RED foods. Watch portion sizes.
- ▶ Limit your TV and computer time. Find other ways to relax that involve being active.
- ▶ Make a weekly schedule. Try to avoid situations that cause stress.

Additional resources

- ▶ Managing Emotions the Healthy Way: LC 21
- ▶ Problem-Solving: Magnetic Memo 13
- ▶ Overcoming Negative Thoughts: LM 4

Suggested activity

Keep a journal. Write down when you felt stress, what caused it, and how you dealt with it. Then make a plan that will help you control stress in the future. Review it with your parents and your PAL.

My notes

1 Limit RED foods 2 Increase GREEN activity 3 Hold Family Meetings 4 Keep Track of Weight



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Especially for the Family Support Person

How can I help her manage stress?

- ▶ Talk about how you manage your own stress. Your ideas may help her.
- ▶ Make sure she understands what causes her stress. Sometimes people miss the obvious.
- ▶ Look for signs she is stressed, including:
 - ▶ Decisions that don't make sense
 - ▶ Sleeping problems
 - ▶ Anger or impatience
 - ▶ Muscle tension—especially in her back and shoulders
 - ▶ Upset stomach and headaches
- ▶ Identify the connection between these signs and any stress that she may be experiencing. Ask questions. Point out the connections you see.
- ▶ Encourage her to set realistic goals for herself.
- ▶ Help her identify ways to deal with stress when she first realizes she is feeling stressed.
- ▶ Talk to her about how to manage on-going stress.

How can I help her manage her time better?

Try to help her understand some key points:

- ▶ Doing too much makes it harder to live a healthy life. It can cause both emotional and physical stress.
- ▶ Learning to set priorities is a valuable life skill. It will help her be more successful in life. It will also keep her healthier. Young people often need help to understand:
 - ▶ When it's important to do their best
 - ▶ When good enough is good enough
 - ▶ How to schedule their time based on their priorities
- ▶ Talk about your own experiences setting priorities and managing your time.

Additional resources

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Suggested activity

Review her stress management plan. Ask what you can do to help. Make your own stress management plan.

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