

Stress Management: Brief Version

Why manage stress?

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

What causes stress?

Stress can come from the usual things that happen in our lives and from unusual events.

What are the symptoms?

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

- You feel tired all of the time.
- 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 aches and pains not caused by exercise.
- Your sleep habits have changed.
- You see other changes in the way you act or feel.
- You feel nervous or angry more than normal.

How long do the effects of stress last?

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

How can I take care of myself?

Taking care of yourself starts with taking a look at the unhealthy ways you may 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 for 20 to 30 minutes at least 3 times a week.
- Look at what upsets you. Is there a way to avoid these things? If not, try to find ways to change how you think about them.
- 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 enough sleep (6 to 10 hours a night).
- Eat 3 to 6 small, balanced meals a day.
- Drink 4 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Drink less coffee and alcohol.
- Use positive thoughts and humor.
- Get professional help with the really stressful events in your life.

Developed by McKesson Health Solutions LLC.

Published by McKesson Health Solutions LLC.

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