

Stress Management for Youth

What is Stress?

Stress is your bodies' reaction to the problems in your life. When you are worried in your mind, your body can feel it! Ever have butterflies in your tummy when you have to give a speech? Or a headache after a bad day at school? Your mind can make your body feel bad.

Not all stress is bad though. It all depends on how you deal with it! Sometimes the stress before a soccer game can make you play like a superstar while the stress of having a fight with a friend can make you feel like you are going to be sick. Stress is both good and bad! Passing a test can be just as stressful as failing. A lot of bad stress over a short period of time though is very hard on your body.

Here are some signs that you may be experiencing bad stress:

- ⊙ lots of headaches, tummy aches or neck pain
- ⊙ more, sadness, panic, anger than usual
- ⊙ being more quiet than usual
- ⊙ trouble relaxing or sleeping
- ⊙ no energy, daydreaming, not wanting to do your normal activities
- ⊙ more energy than usual or restlessness
- ⊙ new nervous habits such as nail biting, hair twisting, thumb sucking, or sighing deeply
- ⊙ trouble getting along with friends.

How to Deal . . .

When you are dealing with stress it's important to make healthy choices on how you spend your time. For example, if you are busy all the time, maybe you need to drop some activities. If things going on at home stress you out, maybe you need to find ways to get out of the house. Be aware of what is making you feel bad and take actions to change it!

Once you know what is making you feel stressed, the best thing to do is to find balance in your life. This means that sometimes we have to deal with life events that cause stress. We can try to keep steady by doing things that makes us feel good and help us release stress, and keep the pressure off.

Here are some things we can do to stay balanced . . .

- ⊙ Talk it out – sometimes the best way to release stress is through words.
- ⊙ Find something you are good at and be proud! Next time you are stressed, think of how good it felt.
- ⊙ Find the funny side of things –a good laugh makes you feel good!
- ⊙ Take some quiet time just to be alone with YOU.
- ⊙ Practice stress management techniques like yoga, deep breathing or meditation.
- ⊙ Eat healthy and try new foods – when your body feels good, you feel good too.
- ⊙ Exercise! When you exercise, your body releases *feel good* chemicals that help fight stress.
- ⊙ Get lots of sleep. Sleep helps your body fix itself.
- ⊙ Take time to just *do nothing* so that your mind and body can chill.