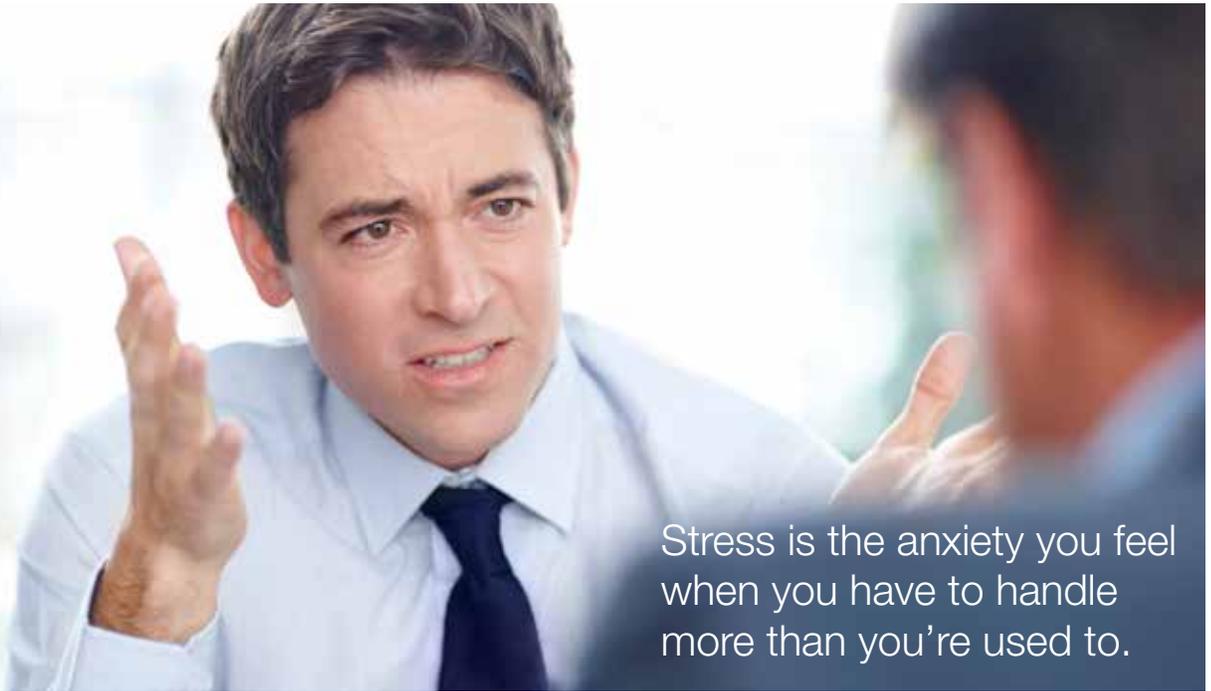


Guide to Stress Management

WELLNESS
CENTER



Stress is the anxiety you feel when you have to handle more than you're used to.

Assess Your Stress Level

Sometimes it's easy to tell where stress is coming from. You can count on stress during a major life change, such as the death of a loved one, moving to a new home, getting a new job, losing a job, getting married or getting divorced. At other times, the reason for feeling stress may not be so clear.

It's important to figure out what causes stress for you. Keeping a stress journal may help. Get a notebook and write down when something makes you feel stressed. Then write how you reacted and what you did to deal with the stress. Keeping a stress journal can help you take steps to reduce the stress or handle it better.

Manage Your Stress

Once you know the cause of your stress, look for ways to reduce the amount of stress in your life, keeping in mind that some stressful situations cannot be avoided. Learn healthy ways to relieve stress or reduce its harmful effects, and keep practicing them until they become second nature to you.

Physical Activity

- Get some exercise. Exercise will not only relieve stress, but also prevent it.
- Fit various forms of activity into your schedule and make them part of your daily routine.

Stress is subjective — what is stressful for you may not be stressful for someone else. Some stress is normal and even helpful. For example, short-term stress can help if you need to work extra hard or react quickly.

Long-term stress, however, can increase the risk of diseases such as depression and heart disease. It can weaken your immune system, making it harder to fight off disease. Stress can also make you moody, tense or depressed.

Nutrition

- Eat foods that improve your health and well-being. For example, increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat, and limit your intake of processed foods and sugar.
- The food guide found at www.choosemyplate.gov is a great resource for nutrition information.

Social Support

- Make an effort to socialize. You may want to avoid people when you feel stressed, but being among friends usually helps relieve stress.
- Be good to yourself and others. You can do this in simple ways such as going for a stroll, chatting with a friend, being around animals or volunteering.

Relaxation

- Learn about and try using relaxation techniques, such as guided imagery, music, yoga or meditation. Try several techniques to find what works best for you.
- Listen to your body when it tells you to slow down or take a break.
- Make sure to get enough sleep. Good sleep habits are one of the best ways to manage stress. Studies have shown that the most restorative sleep happens between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.

Professional Help

Sometimes, professional help is needed to manage stress. Schedule time with a mental health professional (e.g., a licensed social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist) to help you learn stress management strategies, including relaxation techniques. There are also support groups of various types available in most communities.

Sources:

National Institutes of Health. www.nlm.nih.gov. April 2013.
American Heart Association. www.heart.org. May 2013.

This material was created by National Financial Partners Corp., (NFP), its subsidiaries, or affiliates for distribution by their registered representatives, investment advisor representatives and/or agents.

This material was created to provide accurate and reliable information on the subjects covered. It is not intended to provide specific legal, tax or other professional advice. The services of an appropriate professional should be sought regarding your individual situation. Neither NFP nor its affiliates offer legal or tax services.