



# Managing *stress* in your life

We all experience stress in our lives. Job pressures, financial concerns, and family challenges can sometimes feel overwhelming. While it may seem like there's little you can do, there are effective ways to manage stress and regain balance and control.

## What is stress?

Stress is tension from everyday events. These events can affect your mind and body. Everyone experiences stress in different ways and for different reasons.

Stress can come from good and bad events. Bad stress can come from a family member's death, the loss of a job, or a divorce. Good stress can come from things like planning a wedding, buying a home or having a child.

The way that you think can cause stress. When you become angry or worried, your body responds with the physical effects of stress. Stress management techniques can help reduce the effects of stress on your mind and body.

## Physical effects of stress

In stressful situations, your body responds by releasing stress hormones that raise your heart rate, increase breathing, and alter digestion.

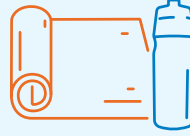
Over time, chronic stress can weaken the immune system and contribute to health issues such as heart problems, infections, and allergies. Stress may also affect appetite and metabolism, leading to changes in weight or eating patterns.

# Tips for reducing stress



## Identify sources of stress

Try to identify what's causing stress in your life. Reflect on how you typically respond to stress, and consider whether your current coping strategies are helpful or harmful.



## Exercise

Exercise can support your immune system, lower your cholesterol, and lower your blood pressure. Any form of exercise can help release mood-elevating chemicals that combat stress.



## Make a realistic schedule

Write down what you need to accomplish and estimate how long each task will take. Set achievable goals and build in breaks to avoid overload.



## Limit caffeine & alcohol

Caffeine is a stimulant, and alcohol is a depressant. Both may affect your stress levels, so limit your intake or do not drink them at all.



## Sleep

Sleeping seven to eight hours a night can help alleviate stress. A consistent night routine and bedtime can help you sleep through the night.



## Relax

Give yourself some time to unwind and clear your mind. Yoga, meditation and deep breathing are great ways to relax. So are reading, working on a hobby, or taking a bath.



## Find support

In some situations — such as the death of a loved one or coping with a serious illness — learning to seek support and practice acceptance can help you and your family better manage stress.



## Quit smoking

Nicotine can boost stress levels. Even though quitting smoking may cause more stress in the short-term, it is one of the best things you can do for your health.



For more information, or if you're having difficulty coping with stress on your own, our care managers are here to help.

**Call 1-877-222-1240 (TTY 711) Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.**