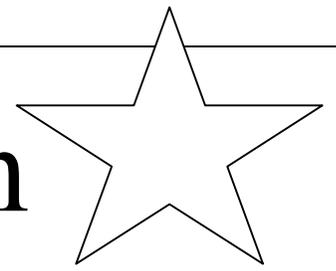


To Your Health



VA Palo Alto Health Care System ★ Patient Education Newsletter ★ Fall 1999

"Promoting good health through information."

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Laura Peters, Ph.D.

Q: What is "Stress?"

A: Any changes that happen in our lives can cause stress. Both good and bad changes can be stressful. For example, a vacation trip can be very positive. It is also a source of stress because of dealing with the airport, being in a strange place, and so on. The loss of a loved one, major illness, or financial problems can be negative sources of stress. If you have to deal with too many changes in a short period of time you can become stressed.

Q: What happens to my mind and body?

A: There is a physical reaction to stressful events. Your heart beats faster, your breathing gets faster, you sweat! If the stress becomes chronic, you will get tired and you will be more likely to get physically ill. It's also more likely that you will get nervous or depressed.

Q: What can I do to fight stress?

A: Know when you are getting stressed so you can act before you feel "burned out."

- Exercise is a great stress-reliever.
 - A 10 minute walk
 - Jogging
 - Swimming
 - Gardening
 - Housework!
- Good nutrition strengthens the body's ability to cope with stress.
- Limit your use of caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Get extra sleep: it can prevent you from becoming rundown and ill. ⇨

★ RECIPE FOR HEALTH ★

Wonderful Stuffed Potatoes Serves 8

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 4 medium potatoes | 1 tsp dill weed |
| 3/4 C low fat cottage cheese | 3/4 tsp herb seasoning |
| 1/4 C low fat milk | 4-6 drops hot sauce |
| 2 Tbsp soft margarine | 2 tsp grated parmesan |

1. Prick potatoes with fork. Bake at 425F for 60 minutes or until fork is easily inserted.
2. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise. Carefully scoop out potato leaving about 1/2 inch of pulp inside shell. Mash pulp in large bowl.
3. Mix in by hand remaining ingredients except parmesan. Spoon mixture into potato shells.
4. Sprinkle each top with 1/4 tsp parmesan.
5. Place on baking sheet and return to oven. Bake 15-20 minutes or until tops are golden brown.

Calories	113	Cholesterol	1mg
Total Fat	3G	Sodium	136mg
		Saturated Fats	Less than 1G

Prevention Points	
<i>Physical Activity & Heart Disease</i>	
	T F
1. Regular physical activity can reduce your chances of getting heart disease.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Most people get enough physical activity from their normal daily routine.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3. People who need to lose some weight are the only ones who will benefit from regular physical activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are many risks and injuries that can occur with exercise.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. To help stay physically active include a variety of activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Answers on back page	

Stress Management Cont.

Q: How can I handle stress?

A: If you can talk yourself through bad situations in a positive way it can really help lower the stress. When a bad situation occurs, tell yourself, "I can handle this. I have gotten through bad times before. What steps can I take to solve this problem?"

People who are stressed and depressed tend to be more alone. Increased activity actually lifts mood.

- Plan activities that give you pleasure
- Call a friend
- Enjoy nature
- Join an organization or club with people that have similar interests

Learning to relax your body and mind is a very good way of coping with stress. Taking a few deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth can help calm your mind and body so that you can think clearly and resolve the situation.

Q: What if these things are not helping me?

A: If you try the above suggestions for stress reduction and you are still feeling tense and anxious or depressed most of the time, then it is time to seek help. Your primary care provider may refer you for counseling or medications. You can also get support in the community through support groups, community centers, senior centers and religious leaders. The idea is to reach out for a hand when the going gets too rough. ★

Healthy Hints

- ✓ Oct/Nov: Ask your provider if you should receive a flu shot
 - ✓ Nov: Participate in the Great American Smokeout
-

***To Your Health is published quarterly for
VAPAHCS veterans and their families.***

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Prevention Points

Physical Activity & Heart Disease

1. **T.** Heart disease is almost twice as likely to develop in inactive people. Being physically inactive is a risk factor for heart disease along with high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, and being overweight. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance for heart disease. Regular physical activity can reduce this risk.
2. **F.** Most Americans are very busy, but not very active. Every American adult should make a habit of getting 30 minutes of low to moderate levels of physical activity daily. This includes walking, gardening, and walking up stairs.
3. **F.** People who are physically active experience many positive benefits. Regular physical activity gives you more energy, reduces stress, and helps you to sleep better. It helps to lower blood pressure and improves blood cholesterol levels. It can also increase muscle strength, help your heart and lungs work more efficiently, and let you enjoy your life more fully.
4. **F.** The most common risk in exercising is injury to the muscles and joints. Such injuries are usually caused by exercising too hard for too long, particularly if a person has been inactive. To avoid injuries, try to build up your level of activity gradually.
5. **T.** Pick several different activities that you like doing. You will be more likely to stay with it. Plan short-term and long-term goals. Get your family and friends to join in. They can help keep you going.