

MYTH: I CAN'T HELP THAT I AM STRESSED



REALITY: THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS

With pressure from school, work, family, money, and health, it isn't surprising that people of all ages can be stressed, sometimes without even realizing it! A small amount of stress can be good, but too much of it can cause health problems. Recognizing and managing stress can be a challenge, but it is important in helping you to reach your weight loss goal and for a healthy, happy you! Here are some ways to help you get started.

- **Recognize the signs** – What are clues that you might be stressed? Symptoms can include headaches, fatigue, anxiety, restlessness, changes in eating habits, weight changes, restlessness, depression, and anger. If you experience any of these symptoms, take a few minutes to think about possible sources of excess stress in your life and ways you can reduce or manage them.
- **Get moving** – Being physically active is a great way to help manage stress. Exercise can help clear your mind and improve both your mental and physical health. It can make you feel better right away. Can't make it to the gym? No worries! Try

going for a walk or shooting some hoops with a friend. You can be physically active anywhere! Don't think of exercise as just one more thing on your to-do list—find an activity you enjoy and it can become an important part of your stress management.

- **Breathe** – Try relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, or deep breathing. These activities can help clear your mind and take you to a much calmer place.
- **Do more of what makes you happy** – Do you have a hobby that you enjoy? Golfing, knitting, crossword puzzles, stamp collecting, or juggling. It doesn't matter what “your thing” is. If you enjoy it and it makes you happy, be sure to make time for it!
- **Keep the right company** – Make time for family and friends who make you smile. You can talk things through with each other, and smile together.
- **Get Enough Sleep.** Sleep allows your body to rest and your brain to recharge. This can reduce anxiety and stress.

INCLUSION TIPS: Research states that individuals with disabilities may experience a higher rate of stressors related to physical, emotional, and environmental barriers they face on a daily basis; therefore, it is important to develop a plan on addressing your stressors in a proactive way. This could include inclusive yoga, walking/wheeling meditation, and breathing exercises.

We can also feel stress from caregiving. If you are a family member who cares for someone with a disability, make sure you also take care of yourself by getting enough rest and other healthy living practices such as finding balance, good nutrition, and physical activity.

FAMILY MATTERS: Talk with kids about managing stress in their lives. From grades, to relationships, to extracurricular activities, kids have a lot of opportunities to practice managing stress as

they grow into adults. Talk with them about what makes them stressed throughout their day. They may need extra help in identifying sources of stress and ways to manage them.

LINKS:

Stress Management: [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-symptoms/art-20050987](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-symptoms/art-20050987)

How Stress Affects Us: [stress.org.uk/how-it-affects-us/](https://www.stress.org.uk/how-it-affects-us/)

Stress and Health: [everydayhealth.com/stress/guide/effects-on-body/](https://www.everydayhealth.com/stress/guide/effects-on-body/)

Healthy Recipe: Tomato and Green Bean Casserole with Spicy Herb Pesto: [eatingwell.com/recipe/258538/tomato-green-bean-casserole-with-spicy-herb-pesto](https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/258538/tomato-green-bean-casserole-with-spicy-herb-pesto)