

## STRESS

Stress occurs when you are faced with situations or events that you do not feel you can manage. Another way of saying this is: you think that what is required of you is beyond what you are able to do and you feel “stressed”.

### **How does stress affect my heart?**

In stressful situations, your body reacts by circulating adrenaline and other stress hormones, in response, your heart rate and blood pressure go up, your breathing becomes faster and shallower, your skin starts to sweat, and in general, your entire body revs up into high gear.

In short term, these reactions make you more alert and able to deal with the stressful situation.

However, if you are under stress for prolonged periods of time other changes occur:

- Fat cells that were released into the blood stream for extra energy become converted into cholesterol
- Platelets circulating in the blood become more “sticky” and start building up inside your arteries
- Your overall patterns of daily life begin to change in ways that make it more difficult to eat well, exercise regularly and get enough rest

Regular situations that trigger stress for you:

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### **How can I manage my stress?**

How we think about an event determines its impact on health.

Learn how to:

- Identify what causes you stress
  - develop plans to manage those times
  - learn stress management skills like breathing and relaxation exercises
- Be physically active every day – this will play a role in reducing the effects of stress
- Identify and hold on to your strong support networks and good family relationships
- Get a Coping with Stress booklet from the PEACH – CR clinic or other books related to stress from their education library
- Ask for help if stress becomes a concern

Things/techniques that have helped you reduce stress:

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What is the first step you are willing to take in the next few days?

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Rate your confidence - How much do you believe you can do this?

Not at all Confident

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Extremely Confident