



Partners in Quality Care

- January 2018 -

In-Home Aides Partners in Quality Care is a monthly newsletter published for member agencies.

© Copyright AHHC 2018 - May be reproduced for In-Home Aides.

Kathie Smith, RN:
VP of State Relations, Home and Community Based Care; AHHC of NC
Editor in Chief



Happy New Year!

Objectives:

- Define how stress affects health
- Describe strategies for coping with stress
- Define healthy coping

This month's newsletter is dedicated to taking care of you! Taking care of yourself as you take care of others is an important part of your overall wellbeing.

STRESS-HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH:

- Stress - just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively or recover from stressful events quicker than others. It's important to know your limits when it comes to stress to avoid more serious health effects.
- Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. They may be recurring, short-term, or long-term and may include things like commuting to and from school or work every day, traveling for a yearly vacation, or moving to another home. Changes can be mild and relatively harmless, such as winning a race, watching a scary movie, or riding a rollercoaster. Some changes are major, such as marriage or divorce, serious illness, or a car accident. Other changes are extreme, such as exposure to violence, and can lead to traumatic stress reactions.
- Stress is different for everyone. What stresses you out may not even bother your best friend and vice versa. Still, your bodies react the same to stressors. That's because the stress response is your body's way of dealing with tough or demanding situations. It causes hormonal, respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous system changes. For example, stress can make your heart beat faster, make you breathe rapidly, sweat, and tense up. It can also give you a burst of energy. This is known as the body's "fight-or-flight response." It's this chemical reaction that prepares your body for a physical reaction because it thinks it's under attack. This type of stress helped our human ancestors survive in nature.
- However, with chronic stress, those same nerve chemicals that are life-saving in short bursts can suppress functions that aren't needed for immediate survival. Your immunity is lowered and your digestive, excretory, and reproductive systems stop working normally. Once the threat has passed, other body systems act to restore normal functioning. Problems occur if the stress response goes on too long, such as when the source of stress is constant, or if the response continues after the danger has subsided.

How can women develop well-being and balance?

Confront stress-Face and manage stress rather than hide it with unhealthy coping.

Face change-Accept change as a challenge and opportunity, not a threat.

Focus on the present-Stay in the present. It doesn't help to worry about the future.

Listen to your mind-Examine beliefs and how they influence life.

Integrate love, work, and play-Learn how to live fully in each area.

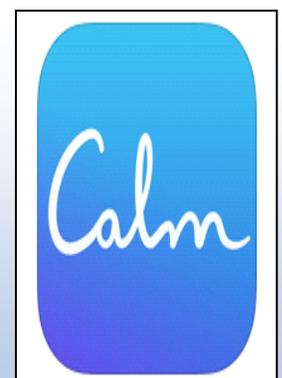
Practice acceptance-Accept the things that cannot be changed and change the things you can.

Accept yourself-Honor and love your inner self.

Seek professional help-Seek professional help in managing difficult stress.

The link below is to the American Psychological Association "**The Road to Resilience**"

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>





TYPES OF STRESS:

There are at least three different types of stress, all of which carry physical and mental health risks:



- Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family and other daily responsibilities.
- Stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness.
- Traumatic stress, experienced in an event like a major accident, war, assault, or a natural disaster where one may be seriously hurt or in danger of being killed.
- The body responds to each type of stress in similar ways. Different people may feel it in different ways. For example, some people experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, depressed mood, anger and irritability. People under chronic stress are prone to more frequent and severe viral infections, such as the flu or common cold, and vaccines, such as the flu shot, are less effective for them.
- Of all the types of stress, changes in health from routine stress may be hardest to notice at first. Because the source of stress tends to be more constant than in cases of acute or traumatic stress, the body gets no clear signal to return to normal functioning. *Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorder, and other illnesses.*

Coping with Stress:

(This list is not all inclusive, these are some of the more common symptoms. Check both list, to determine how you are coping. Then set goals to improve if needed):

Healthy

- Learn to say no
- Exercise
- Healthy diet
- Rest
- Time Management
- Laughter/Fun
- Relaxation

Unhealthy

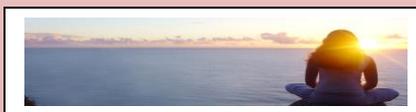
- Over/under eating
- Smoking
- Use of Alcohol
- Drugs
- Isolation
- Sleep deprivation
- Procrastination

Healthy Coping- Exercise

- Walking
- Jogging
- Workout
- Bicycling
- May be formal or informal workout
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Pilates

Healthy Coping- Learn to say no

- Do you ever say Yes, when you mean No?
 - Too much responsibility can create unusual amounts of stress
 - Know how much you can handle
 - Prioritize what must be done in a day
 - Save some time for yourself



What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy. Some of your daily life activities-doing active chores around the house, yard work, walking the dog-are examples.

To get the *health benefits* of physical activity, include activities that make you breathe harder and make your heart and blood vessels healthier. Check with your physician before you start this type of exercise routine.

These *aerobic activities* include things like brisk walking, running, dancing, swimming, and playing basketball. Also include strengthening activities to make your muscles stronger, like push-ups and lifting weights.

Some activity is better than none.

The more you do, the greater the health benefits and the better you'll feel.

Healthy coping - time management:

- Planning & organizing the day will help decrease the stress of getting behind
- Prioritizing is a big part of the time management activity
- Maintaining a schedule will promote success with time management
- Technique to gain control over one's life, while finding solution to time wasters

Healthy coping- talking to someone:

- Venting your feelings, worries, stressors to a trusted friend or family member
- May be in person, or telephone
- If no one to talk to writing thoughts/feelings may be helpful and then may destroy document when finished
- See a therapist if needed

COPING WITH STRESS:

The effects of stress tend to build up over time. Taking practical steps to maintain your health and outlook can reduce or prevent these effects. The following are some tips that may help you to cope with stress:

- Seek help from a qualified mental health care provider if you are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, have suicidal thoughts, or are using drugs or alcohol to cope.
- Get proper health care for existing or new health problems.
- Stay in touch with people who can provide emotional and other support. Ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations to reduce stress due to work burdens or family issues, such as caring for a loved one.
- Recognize signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- Set priorities-decide what must get done and what can wait, and learn to say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload.
- Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- Avoid dwelling on problems. If you can't do this on your own, seek help from a qualified mental health professional who can guide you.
- Exercise regularly-just 30 minutes per day of gentle walking can help boost mood and reduce stress.
- Schedule regular times for healthy and relaxing activities.
- Explore stress coping programs, which may incorporate meditation, yoga, tai chi, or other gentle exercises.

If you or someone you know is overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional. If you or someone close to you is in crisis, call the toll-free, 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

Did you know?

When you are **not** physically active, you are more likely to:

- Get heart disease
- Get type 2 diabetes
- Have high blood pressure
- Have high blood cholesterol
- Have a stroke

Making Healthier Food Choices:

A large body of evidence now shows that healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout all stages of the lifespan. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans reflects this evidence through its recommendations.

Learn more about the USDA 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans at:

https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf

Physical activity is generally safe for everyone. People who are physically fit have less chance of injury than those who are not fit. The health benefits you gain from being active are far greater than the chances of getting hurt. Being *inactive* is definitely not good for your health. Here are some things you can do to stay safe while you are active:

- If you haven't been active in a while, start slowly and build up.
- Learn about the types and amounts of activity that are right for you.
- Choose activities that are appropriate for your fitness level.
- Build up the time you spend before switching to activities that take more effort.
- Use the right safety gear and sports equipment.
- Choose a safe place to do your activity.
- *See a health care provider if you have a health problem.*

See page 4 of the newsletter for the dietary guidelines for American's 2015-2020 eighth edition:

“How to Build a Healthy Eating Pattern”