



Calm, Cool and Collected

Horizon



Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

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Always speak with your doctor before starting an exercise program or diet.

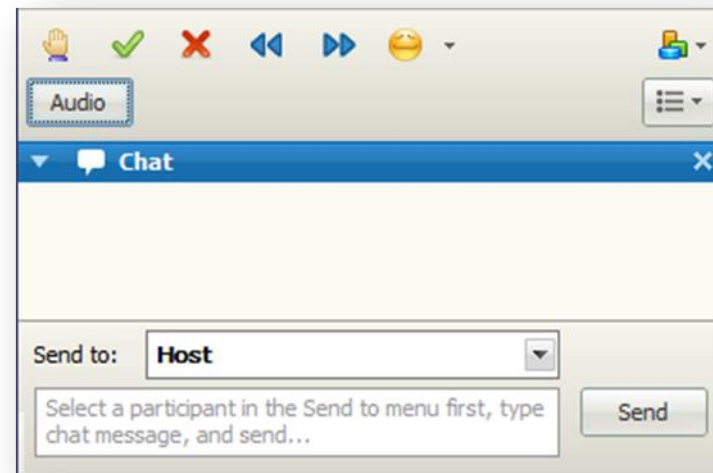
If you have any questions or concerns about your health or the health of any of your family members, consult your doctor.

There may be therapies and programs described here that are not covered benefits. Check your benefit plan or contact your benefit administrator for coverage details.

Questions? Use the Chat Tool

How to send a message via Chat:

1. Look at the top-right corner of the screen for the word *Chat* with dialogue bubble image.
2. Click on the image.
3. On the lower right of the screen, see dropdown menu for options on who to send a message to. Select *Host*.
4. Type your question in the box and select *Send*.



Questions may be addressed to the group after the presentation.

Agenda

- 1 Reasons for stress
- 2 Symptoms of stress
- 3 Healthy ways to manage stress
- 4 Setting goals to change habits
- 5 Your questions

What Causes Stress?



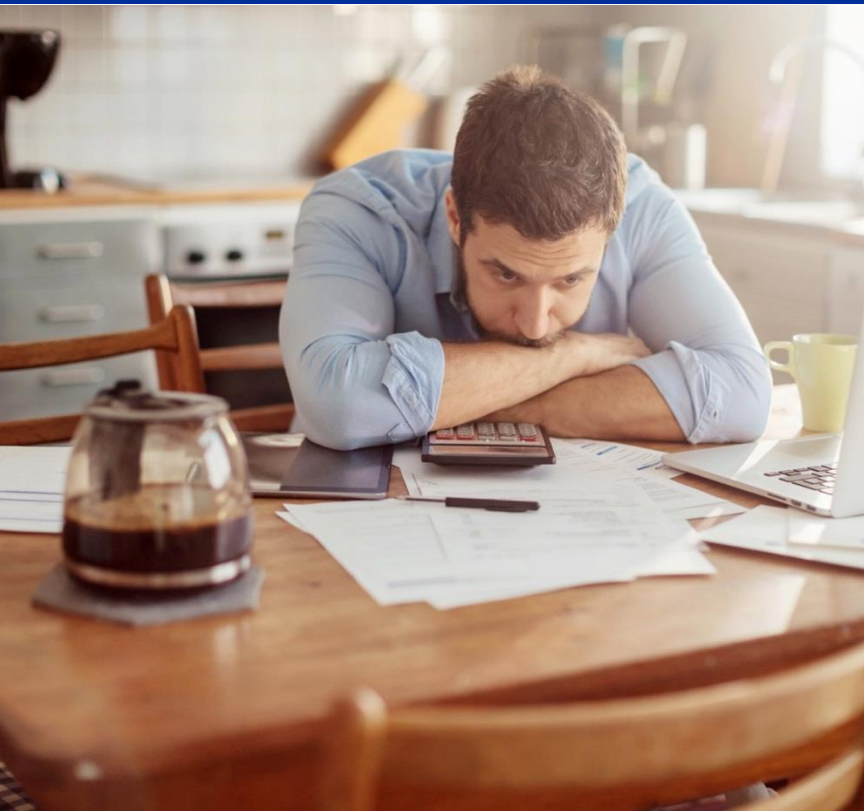
- Relationships
- Family
- Social situations
- Major life changes
- Work
- Health
- Time
- Finances

Stress Symptoms



- Headaches
- Stiff neck
- Tight shoulders
- Quickened heartbeat
- Upset stomach
- Stomach pains
- Problems sleeping
- Illness
- Depression

Stress Affects Thoughts and Emotions



Stress can make you:

- Feel cranky and unable to handle small problems
- Feel frustrated
- Lose your temper
- Worry too much about small things
- Too distracted to focus on difficult tasks
- Feel jumpy or tired
- Imagine that bad things are happening or are about to happen

Over Time, Stress Can Lead To ...

- High blood pressure
- Heart arrhythmias
- Coronary artery disease and atherosclerosis
- Chronic neck and back pain
- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Poor immune system function



Avoid Unhealthy Behaviors



- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- Using Illicit drugs
- Lying on the couch
- Acting out in anger
- Going on shopping sprees
- Gambling
- Making unhealthy food choices

Effective Strategies for Managing Stress

- Learn healthy coping strategies.
- Try one or two strategies each month until you find a few that work for you.
- Practice techniques until they become habits when feeling stressed.



Example of Daily Stress Journaling

Time	Stressful Event	Reaction (Symptoms, Thoughts, Behaviors)	Coping Response
7:30 a.m.	Kids not getting ready for school	Felt tightness in the stomach, yelled at kids	Had a doughnut when I got to work
9:30 a.m.	Late for meeting with supervisor	Felt tightness in the stomach and fear about performance review	Talked with coworker about it and felt better
11 a.m.	Copier broke down again	Headache, snapped at coworker to call the repair technician	Not sure
3:15 p.m.	Call from sister about her divorce interrupted by work	Headache got worse	Daydreamed about trip to Hawaii
5:30 p.m.	Meeting ran overtime, couldn't leave at 5 p.m.	Headache still there, neck begins to ache as well	Went out for a few drinks with colleagues

Relax Your Mind



- Talk with someone about your feelings.
- Do something you enjoy.
- Practice “mindfulness” such as meditation.
- Practice guided imagery for relaxation.

Relax Your Body



- Exercise: Reduces stress by producing chemicals called endorphins, which have a calming effect on the body. Walking is a great way to get started.
- Relaxation techniques:
 - Breathing exercises
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Yoga, tai chi, qigong

Consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.

Super Foods to Combat Stress

Food	Importance
Complex carbohydrate	Helps brain to make serotonin
Citrus	Produces vitamin C
Green leafy vegetables	Contains magnesium
Fatty fish	Contains omega-3 fatty acids
Almonds	Contains vitamins B and E
Low-fat milk	Contains calcium
Blueberries	Contains antioxidants

Words of Wisdom

1. Examine your lifestyle.
 - Get enough sleep.
 - Make healthy food choices throughout the day.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Embrace a sense of purpose.
2. Get support.
3. Change your thinking.
 - Have a positive attitude.
 - Don't sweat the small stuff.
 - Practice assertive communication.

Tips for Reducing Stress



- Listening to music
- Aromatherapy
- Massage therapy
- Pet therapy
- Participating in a club or religious community
- Seeking opportunities to smile and laugh
- Learning how to say “no”

Set Goals to Reduce Your Stress



If you're ready to reduce stress in your life, setting goals may help.

- Think about why you want to reduce stress.
- Set an achievable and realistic goal.
- Keep a journal to monitor your progress.
- Find support.
- Reward yourself for a job well done!

Meet Maura

- Stressors
 - Job as customer service manager for a computer company.
 - Being the mother of two young children.
 - Feeling overwhelmed by demands placed on her.
- Effects
 - Can't remember the last time she took a lunch break at work or a class at the gym.
 - Lies awake at night worrying about getting everything done.



How to Help Maura



- Long-term goal
 - Find a better balance between personal, home and family needs.
- Short-term goal
 - Take a 15-minute walk each night.

Meet Eli

- Stressors
 - Small things that add up.
- Effects
 - When a problem comes up at work, it keeps him up at night and makes him anxious thinking about how things could have been done differently.



How to Help Eli



- Long-term goal
 - Practice positive thinking when stressful events come up.
- Short-term goal
 - Breathing and relaxation exercises when he feels stressed.

Meet Angela



- **Stressors**
 - Being a full-time caregiver for her elderly mother who has Alzheimer's disease.
 - Receives little help from her sister.
- **Effects**
 - Can't remember the last time she took a vacation or met with a friend for coffee.
 - Finds herself getting frustrated easily.

How to Help Angela

- Long-term goal
 - Involve her sister more.
 - Find respite care so she isn't providing all the care.
- Short-term goal
 - Attend a caregiver support group every week.



Tips for Staying on Track

1. Plan for setbacks
 - Write down your goals, possible barriers, and your ideas for getting past them.
 2. Get support
 - Inform family and friends of your goals and reasons for wanting to change.
 - Consider getting support from a counselor.
- If you slip up, don't feel bad just get right back on track and think about the positive!
 - Think of the times that you have avoided stress by making changes.

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