

How To Help Your Teen Manage Stress

Is Your Teen Stressed Out?

Your teen might feel like there is so much pressure to “do and be the best” in school, at home, online, in after-school activities and his or her social life. As a parent, you know that stress is just about everywhere!

Stress

Stress is your body’s fight-or-flight response. You may feel energy surge through your body if you are in an emergency, or if you are worried or anxious about something.

What Stress Can Do

Stress can make a current problem worse or give your teen health problems such as:

- upset stomach
- headache
- trouble breathing
- dizziness
- chest pains
- heartburn
- muscle pain, aches, cramps
- trouble concentrating
- change in sleep habits
- change in appetite.

Feelings of anger may turn into chronic (long-lasting) irritation and feelings of fear may become anxiety.

Long-term stress can cause:

- depression
- anxiety disorders
- ulcers
- high blood pressure
- phobias
- disturbed sleep patterns
- tension headaches.

Stress affects everyone but reactions to stress vary from person to person.

Help Your Teen Stress Less

Here are some tips to help your teen manage stress.

- **Maintain good health habits.** Make sure your teen is eating well-balanced meals and avoiding caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. A healthy body tolerates stress more effectively.
- **Get some kind of physical activity every day.** Do physical activities as a family. Go for a bike ride, walk, skate (inline or ice) or play catch at the park. Build weekend family activities around physical activities.
- **Get plenty of rest.** Your teen’s body and mind need to “re-energize” each night. Most teens do not get enough sleep each night.

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- **Do an activity you enjoy.** Make sure your teen is involved in activities that he or she enjoys doing. Along with school sports or clubs, this might also include community activities, clubs or outdoors groups. Be sure not to push your teen into activities he or she does not want to do.
- **Structure daily activities.** Help your teen plan out his or her activities to make the best use of his or her time. Be sure to plan enough time for homework, activities and time to relax.
- **Talk about stress.** Talking with your teen may help him or her relax.
 - Help your teen identify things that might be making him or her feel stressed and ways to cope with the situation.
 - Encourage your teen to avoid holding in feelings day after day. Let him or her know that he or she can talk with you about them and, together, you will think of ways to make things easier.

When to Get Help

If you notice that stress is interfering with your teen's everyday life or he or she is having physical problems, talk with your health care provider.



For additional tips and resources to help manage stress, visit changetochill.org.