Coping with stress checklist

Stress is a very individual thing. Something that one person finds stressful may not bother someone else. How you cope with stress is also individual. It's important to learn to manage stress because unhealthy responses to stress may lead to health problems.

How do you feel?

When you feel stressed, do you react in any of these unhealthy ways:

- Feel sad, overwhelmed, worried or helpless
- Feel pressured, hurried, or irritable
- Have difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Eat too much or not enough

- Eat too much or not enough
- Sleep too little or too much
- Drink alcohol or smoke more than usual
- Have stomach problems, headache, or chest pains

Try these tips to help you cope with stress.

Some of the following suggestions may help:

❏ **Take care of yourself.** Exercise regularly, eat nutritious food, and get enough sleep. Limit alcohol, overeating, and smoking.

❏ **Connect with others.** Surround yourself with supportive friends and others who are important to you.

❏ **Participate.** Join in social and community activities.

❏ **Stay positive.** Avoid negative thoughts, like "I can't do that." Remember what you *can* do.

❏ **Be realistic.** Try not to expect too much of yourself and others—nobody is perfect.

❏ **Act.** Find ways to solve problems instead of feeling helpless about them. Consider them challenges instead of obstacles.

❏ **Do activities you enjoy.** Find new activities to enjoy—take a dance or photography class, learn to play tennis or golf, or a musical instrument.

❏ **Meditate.** Learn and practice relaxation techniques.

❏ **Give yourself some breathing room.** Cut back on your obligations when you can—learn to say "no" when you're too busy.

Talk to your healthcare provider to learn how to help manage stress in your life.