



## Stress

Life without stress would be boring. Life with too much stress, however, can result in changes to our mental, physical and emotional health and well-being. Stress, therefore, can be detrimental to health.

### What is stress?

- Stress is the body's reaction to a perceived threat; it is often called the "fight or flight" syndrome.
- During times of stress, adrenaline and hormones are released and the nervous system is activated, sharpening our senses. Simultaneously, our pulse rises, our muscles tense and our immune system shuts down.
- Life without stress would be boring. Life with too much stress, however, can result in changes to our mental, physical and emotional health and well-being. Stress, therefore, can be detrimental to health.
- Constant stress can contribute to family breakdown and to chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, memory loss, depression, on-the-job accidents and injuries.
- On-going or chronic stress interferes with the ability to perform effectively and to feel well.

### Who copes best with stress?

Some people cope well with stress. Generally, they share certain characteristics and common traits:

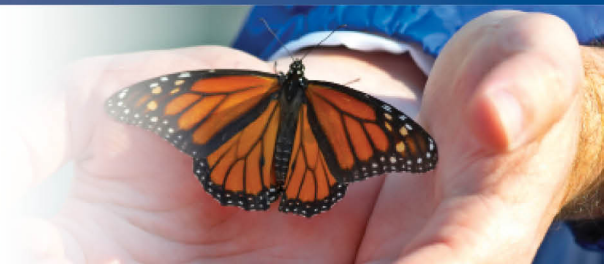
- They have a supportive network of family and friends.
- They take time to relax, meditate or practice relaxation techniques.
- They engage in a relaxing hobby.
- They exercise on a regular basis.
- They eat a nutritious diet.

### What are some helpful tips to manage stress?

- Learn to manage your time; set priorities.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Set aside time to play and enjoy life.

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- Learn to say "no" to extra social or work requests.
- Occasionally, seek a change in scenery (take a walk, schedule a break, etc.).
- Start a stress diary and monitor the causes of stress in your life. Knowing what kinds of situations cause stress can help you to understand and control them.
- Prevent chronic stress by recognizing the signs of stress and by learning appropriate relaxation techniques.
- Relaxation tapes, biofeedback and progressive muscle relaxation are several behavioral techniques to combat excessive stress reactions.
- See a physician, Licensed Professional Counselor, or other health care professional to seek assistance if stress levels begin to affect your physical and/or emotional health in a negative way.



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(719) 572-6100 | (800) 285-1204 | [WWW.ASPENPOINTE.ORG](http://WWW.ASPENPOINTE.ORG)