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Five ways to ease the stress in your life

Some stress is normal

Everyone feels stress from time to time. Some people describe it as tension or pent-up energy. Some stress is good. A car cuts in front of you on the highway. You slam your breaks in a panic. Stress helps you react the right way.

But severe or long-term stress can cause problems. Health research shows a link between stress and trouble controlling diabetes and asthma. Other research shows that stress can cause heart problems and a rise in blood pressure. You may already know the impact stress has on sleep.

Stress management tips

The good news is there are steps you can take to reduce the stress in your life. Here are five you may find helpful:

1. **Manage your time better.** Make a list of tasks you need to do first. Set priorities, and forgive yourself when not everything's perfect.
2. **Set limits.** Yes, you want to tackle that extra work project. And maybe you made a million promises to run errands for your family. But try to end that knots-in-your-stomach feeling. Be honest about what you can realistically do.

3. **Exercise.** We all know how exercise can improve your health. But it can also help you feel better by lowering your stress. Take a walk, run, golf, swim, dance, do yoga. Just stay active. It has a calming effect. It can also help you forget about your problems.
4. **Ease your fears.** Sometimes the pressure we feel is what we cause ourselves. So ask yourself if a certain situation deserves as much stress as you feel. Ask yourself how likely it is that something you can't handle will happen.
5. **Talk to someone.** Talking to someone you trust can do wonders for lowering stress. It may even help you solve a problem. But talk to your doctor or seek counseling if your stress doesn't go away.

To learn more ways to manage stress, visit Aetna IntelliHealth® at www.intelihealth.com.

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