



Protect yourself from stress



When we feel challenged by demands on our time, energy, and resources, we may experience stress. While occasional stress is usually harmless, ongoing stress that disrupts your daily routines can affect your quality of life and potentially put your long-term health at risk. Being able to recognize the signs of stress and find different strategies to manage it can help you be your healthiest self and avoid larger health problems down the road.

Warning signs of stress

The symptoms of stress are not the same for everyone, but may include:

- Shoulder, neck, or back pain
- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Increased mood swings
- Headaches
- Inability to focus or remember things
- Lack of energy
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Changes in eating habits or sleep
- Upset stomach
- Feeling overwhelmed

Healthy ways to cope

If you feel increased levels of stress, try one or more of the following tips to figure out what helps you manage stress the best:

- **Move your body regularly.** Even 10 minutes at a time can make a difference.
- **Make time for hobbies you enjoy.** Start a new book, listen to music, or sit down to paint.
- **Meditate or practice deep breathing.** Just a few minutes of mindfulness can help.
- **Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.** Make sure your body has the nutrients it needs to stay energized.
- **Try to get enough sleep.** Aim for 7 to 9 hours a night if you can.
- **Connect with others.** Talk through your stress and lean on people you trust.

The effects of long-term stress on your health

Finding healthy ways to deal with stress now may help you avoid the health effects of long-lasting stress, such as:

- Heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke
- Digestive problems like ulcers
- Frequent asthma attacks
- Anxiety or depression
- Weight gain
- Memory problems



Talk to a doctor

If you are having trouble coping with stress, reach out to a doctor or a mental health professional for help.

To find a doctor or healthcare provider in your plan's network, use the Find Care and Cost feature on the **SydneySM Health app** or at anthem.com/ca.

Sources

Mayo Clinic website: Stress management (accessed September 2023): [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Coping With Stress (accessed September 2023): [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Cleveland Clinic website: Emotional Stress: Warning Signs, Management, When to Get Help (accessed September 2023): my.clevelandclinic.org.

The information above is meant to educate, not serve as medical advice. Ask your doctor for medical advice about your health.

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