



U.S. Public Health Service Nursing

Tip of the Month

October 2016



Stress Management

Stress occurs when you perceive that demands placed on you — such as work, school or relationships — exceed your ability to cope. Stress can be beneficial, boosting the drive and energy to help people get through situations like exams or work deadlines. However, extreme stress can have health consequences, impacting immune, cardiovascular, neuroendocrine and central nervous systems.

Can managing stress reduce or prevent heart disease?

Managing stress is a good idea for your overall health, and researchers are currently studying whether managing stress is effective for heart disease. Untreated chronic stress can result in serious health conditions including anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. Research shows that stress can contribute to the development of major illnesses, such as heart disease, depression and obesity.

What can you do about stress?

Exercising, maintaining a positive attitude, not smoking, not drinking too much alcohol, enjoying a healthy diet, and maintaining a healthy weight are good ways to deal with stress. Finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress as it occurs, many negative health consequences can be reduced.

Minimize Stress with These Healthy Habits:



- 1. Talk with family and friends.** A daily dose of friendship is great medicine. Contact friends or family to share your feelings, hopes and joys.
- 2. Exercise and Engage in Daily Activity.** Regular physical activity can relieve mental and physical tension. Physically active adults have lower risk of depression and loss of mental functioning. Possibly join your fellow Officers for the PHS Foot March on November 5th, 2016. Website: <http://phsfootmarch.wixsite.com/mypfm> or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PFM-497972463728551>
- 3. Embrace the things you are able to change.** Smile and laugh. While we may not be able to do some of the things we once enjoyed, we are never too old to learn a new skill, work toward a goal, or love and help others. Volunteer your time or spend time helping out a friend. Helping others helps you.
- 4. Get enough sleep.** Try to get six to eight hours of sleep each night. If you can't sleep, take steps to help reduce stress and depression.
- 5. Give up bad habits.** Too much alcohol, cigarettes or caffeine can increase blood pressure. If you smoke, decide to quit now. If you do drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- 6. Get organized.** Use "to do" lists to help you focus on your most important tasks. Approach big tasks one step at a time. For example, start by organizing just one part of your life — your car, desk, kitchen, closet, cupboard or drawer.
- 7. Slow down.** Try to "pace" instead of "race." Plan ahead to get the most important things done without having to rush.

Additional information can be found here: [American Heart Association, Heart.org](http://www.heart.org).



Background: Historic USPHS Hospital Seattle opened in 1933 as a Marine Hospital. Redesignated as a USPHS Hospital in 1951 until ceasing government operations in 1981.

PHS-NURSE LIST SERV

TO REQUEST A MENTOR

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