

Ways to Wellness™

Integrative Medicine for Kids

STRESS MANAGEMENT



What's it about? Which of the following sounds fun to you? A surprise quiz, an argument, losing your lunch money, or staining your favorite shirt?

Okay, trick question. Not only are these things no fun, they can even make you upset. Even thinking about them can make you upset. For instance, you might get a headache before taking a test or feel sick to your stomach watching your parents having a fight.

This upset feeling is called stress. And while it would be great to imagine life without stress, the truth is that all of us have to deal with it sometimes. Stress is a normal part of being alive.

There is good news, though. While you can't always change the things that give you stress (have you ever tried talking your teacher out of giving a test?), you can change how you react to stress. Instead of getting upset and trying to run away from hard stuff, you can learn how to stay calm and deal with it. That's called Stress Management, and it's an important skill for growing up.

How does it work? Often the way we handle stress is the opposite of what we really need to do. For instance, we might tighten our muscles, hold our breath, run away, or imagine things just going from bad to worse. All of these are natural reactions to stress, but as you probably know by now, they don't make you feel any better!

In Stress Management, your counselor can help you replace skills that don't work with skills that do. You can learn how to breathe deeply and relax instead of tightening up. You can learn how to use hypnosis, meditation and mental imagery to replace worried thoughts with calm ones. You can even learn better ways to feed and exercise your body in order to keep it strong and healthy and ready for whatever happens in life.



Three easy steps. To decide if you need help with your stress, try these three steps. First, check out how you feel most of the time. If you're often angry or out of control, if you avoid important things like homework or if you have pain, stomachaches, too many worries or trouble sleeping, you probably need some help managing stress.

Second, take a look at what's stressing you out. Is it a certain teacher or kid at school? Are things tough at home? Do you just have too much work to do?

Third, make a plan. A parent, doctor or counselor can help you figure out what you may need to do to make the situation better. Remember, when you can't change *what* bugs you, you can at least change *how much* it bugs you. And that's a skill you'll be thankful for each day.



For more information call 612-813-7888
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