

All about **STRESS**

What is stress?

Stress is a mind and body reaction to difficult changes and challenges in life. Some stress can be beneficial; however, bad stress can harm your health if not managed correctly.

How does the body respond to stress?

The body responds to stressful events with a “flight or fight” instinct. Heart rate and blood pressure rise, muscles become tense and sweating may occur. A body faced with ongoing stress never gets a chance to relax. This can lead to changes in the way one feels and acts, and may produce nervousness, fear, confusion, anxiety and irritability.

Stress also can lead to other health issues, such as:

- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Depression or anxiety
- Back pain
- Drug and alcohol use
- Weakened immune system
- Skin conditions
- Trouble sleeping
- Lack of energy

Ways to manage stress

- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Meditate, write in a journal or daydream.
- Try yoga or tai chi.
- Take a warm bath or get a massage.
- Get rid of clutter.
- Practice deep breathing and relaxation techniques.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Sing and laugh; make time for fun.
- Take time to plan for your week.
- Be kind to yourself and others.
- Get involved in activities like drama, arts, crafts or religious groups.
- Ask for support, advice, assistance and guidance from mentors, friends and family.

If you feel overwhelmed, get help from a health care professional. To find a doctor, call **(502) 629-KIDS (5437)**.



NORTON
Children's
Prevention & Wellness