

Carers Information Card - How to manage stress.

Stress is the collection of physical and psychological changes that occur in response to a challenge in a person's life and environment.

How can this affect me?

Your brain becomes aware of the trigger and releases adrenalin which can cause:

- Mentally alert senses to be activated
- Breathing rate to increase
- Heart rate to speed up and blood pressure to rise
- Increased sweating
- Lower immune system
- Body functions such as digestion to slow down.



What can be the long term effects of prolonged stress?

Some long – term effects of prolonged stress can include:

- Reduced appetite
- Loss of body weight
- High blood pressure
- Stroke / cardiac event
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Colds / flus

What should I avoid?

- Alcohol use
- Smoking
- Drug abuse
- Poor nutrition
- Neglected sleep
- Disrupted family relationships

What can I do about it?

1/ Exercise helps you to manage emotional stress and tension.

2/ Relaxation helps control stress and improve your physical and mental well-being. Some methods include yoga, tai-chi, muscle relaxation, imagery and breathing techniques.

3/ Time management through using a calendar, diary or planner, and checking it faithfully before committing to anything, helps reduce stress.

4/ Organizational skills can reduce the stress of misplaced objects & clutter.

5/ Carers with strong support systems experience fewer physical and emotional symptoms of stress. Loved ones, friends, business associates, neighbours, and even pets are all part of strong social networks. Where possible, spend time nurturing your friendships and relationships.

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Purpose: To provide information that reinforces the suggestions provided by nursing or support staff to assist carers to be able to manage stress for both themselves and their loved ones.

Note:

1. If you have any concerns, please let nursing or support staff know.
2. Consider enrolling in a relaxation course / structured exercise
3. Discuss respite and carer support options with your GP, or the nursing and support staff. Consider counselling.

Please contact: The Community Palliative Care Service if you have any concerns.

Further Information: www.caresearch.com.au

Acknowledgements: Occupational Therapy Department – Swan Hill District Health

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Please return this card to the Community Palliative Care Service when no longer required.

