

# Stress Rescue for the family

Stress is an inevitable part of daily life. In some regards, stress can be very positive, as it acts as a great motivator. More often, however, stress can lead to *illness, unhappiness, and strained relationships*. Taking the time to minimize stress can go a long way in maintaining the physical and emotional health of your family unit.

With our busy schedules, sometimes the simple things get over-looked. Building family time into your regular routine will help to decrease individual stress and can also help identify a family member's struggle to deal with his or her stress. **We all can use these tips + reminders!**

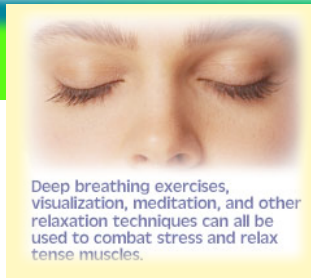
~ content thanks to Dina Eino BSc, ND [Naturopathic Doctor and Owner of The Pomegranate Tree, a Natural Health Clinic in Oakville] ~

## make time for family

1. Do household chores together. Working as a family to keep a household running allows each individual of the family to take pride in the home. Doing dishes, folding laundry, cleaning out the garage or raking leaves together provides time to communicate as a family. In addition, it spreads the load of chores so that each member contributes to the workload and no single person becomes overwhelmed.

2. Share at least one meal per day together. Meal time is an important time to come together and discuss events of the day, share feeling and make plans for days to come. If evenings are too hectic in your family, [homework and activities] consider sitting down together for breakfast. For families who rarely have the opportunity to sit down together for a meal, planning 1-2 family meals per week (Sat morning and Sunday evening, for example) would be a great start.

3. Plan family events. An event can be something "big" like a family holiday, or it can be far simpler, like a family games night. Regardless of what you choose, allow everyone to be involved in the planning and preparation so that the event reflects each individual of the family in some way.



Deep breathing exercises, visualization, meditation, and other relaxation techniques can all be used to combat stress and relax tense muscles.

## helping children manage stress

### Recognize Stress in the family

Stress can come in many forms. For many people, symptoms such as headaches, fatigue or indigestion appear or worsen during times of stress. For children - tummy aches, bedwetting, and frequent night-wakings can indicate increased levels of stress. Your stressed child also be clingy and cry excessively, be aloof, listless behaviour and aggression. Any unusual behaviour for your child may be a sign of stress.

### Helping Children Manage Stress

Children primarily learn by example. The best way to teach your child how to manage stress is by effectively managing stress yourself.

- \* Eat whole, nutritious meals at regular intervals. A healthy body is better able to deal with stress.
- \* Get regular exercise. In addition to keeping your physically fit, exercise benefits the brain and helps to keep stress chemicals in check.
- \* Be an active listener. When your child wants to speak about his or her problems, listen attentively and ask appropriate questions. Focus on open-ended questions like "what happened next?" and "how did that make you feel?" Sometimes just talking about a problem really helps.
- \* Learn what helps you and your family members effectively deal with stress. For some people it will be vigorous activity, for others it may be quiet reflection. Once you know what each family member needs, you can support each other in managing stress in a healthy way.

## supplements & support

Individuals may need a bit more support in managing stress. A basic multivitamin can provide essential vitamins and minerals which support the body in dealing with daily stress. B vitamins are particularly important during times of high stress. Herbal teas such as passion flower, chamomile, catnip and valerian can be very relaxing and are safe for all members of the family. Herbs such as St. John's Wort, Skullcap and Withania are all very supportive in times of stress.

Finally, if you are feeling overwhelmed or feel that your stress is not manageable, speak to someone that can help. Seek out a Naturopathic Doctor or a family physician for referral to a counselor or psychotherapist.

### first aid/ wellness scenario #16

Answers next bulletin

- ? 1. At what temperature does a cold emergency become life-threatening?  
2. What are 3 signs of frostbite?

### Answers to last 2HEALTH Bulletin's scenario #15:

1. Name 3 products NOT good for a safe sleep environment. bumper pads/ sleep monitors with false claims/ sleep positioners
2. Name 3 'Safe Sleep' tips. "back to sleep" / using a wearable blanket or sleep sack / no smoking or 3rd hand smoke

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