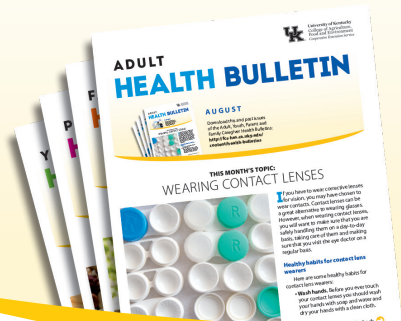


# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



**APRIL 2022**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# HOW TO HANDLE CHRONIC STRESS



**A**pril is National Stress Awareness Month, and while stress is unavoidable for the majority of us, there are many ways to help prevent and manage it.

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can be a positive thing and is sometimes needed when we need to be on high alert like when competing in sports, working on an important project, or facing a dangerous situation. However, if stress lasts a long time — a condition known as chronic stress — that “high-alert” response becomes harmful rather than helpful.

We all experience stress in very different ways. Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the most common explanation is a

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***Talk to a mental health professional if you feel unable to cope, have suicidal thoughts, or use drugs or alcohol to cope.***



**Try relaxation methods. Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or tai chi may help.**

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physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time. If that stressor does not go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems.

It is natural to feel stress and anxiety. Below are ways to help yourself and others manage stress:

- **Get enough sleep.** Shoot for seven or more hours per night.
- **Exercise regularly.** Just 30 minutes a day of walking can boost mood and reduce stress.
- **Build a social support network.** People who spend time with family and friends find healthier ways to cope with stress.
- **Set priorities and boundaries.** Decide what must be done first and what can wait. Say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload.

- **Think positive.** Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have failed to do.
- **Try relaxation methods.** Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or tai chi may help.
- **Seek help.** Talk to a mental health professional if you feel unable to cope, have suicidal thoughts, or use drugs or alcohol to cope.

**REFERENCES:**

- <https://www.stress.org>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/cope-with-stress>

***If you or someone you know is in crisis,  
call the toll-free, 24-hour  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).***

**ADULT  
HEALTH BULLETIN**

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