

## Managing Stress and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming. They are strong emotions that we may experience at every age and in a wide variety of circumstances. Learning how to manage stress will help you and the people around you to become stronger individually and as a community.

As difficult as stress can be mentally, it does affect more than your brain alone. It affects your body, causing such issues as decreased immune function, elevated blood pressure, and various hormonal imbalances. It is important for your physical and mental health that you learn how to recognize stress and how to deal with it effectively.

Stress could look like:

- Worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep
- Inability to concentrate
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Mastering our response to stress and anxiety can take a lifetime of effort, but try these five tips to get you started:

- **Recognize your emotions** – Recognizing your emotions requires complete honesty with yourself. Once you are completely open and honest with yourself about what is going on, you are free to both make healthier choices and to detach yourself from your old patterns.
- **Listen to your body** – You might notice sometimes that you have less energy, perhaps an upset stomach or other symptoms. These may be signs that you need to listen to your body to understand why something does not feel right.
- **Daily Physical Activity** – Look for ways to incorporate more physical activity into your routine. This could be at home, work, with family or virtually with friends.
- **Eat well** – A healthy lifestyle compliments a healthy diet. Keep your body fuelled with the proper nutrition by limiting your sugar intake and increasing your vegetable and protein intake. Focus on quality foods that are minimally processed.
- **Take a deep breath.** If you find yourself in a tough situation, whether it is physical or mental, take a few minutes, go for a quick walk or take 5-10 deep breaths. This could help you regain focus and help you with certain triggers.

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, please visit the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#).

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.