MANAGE YOUR STRESS REDUCE YOUR RISK

Stress management, combined with strong social support, can be just as important as diet and exercise to reduce your health risks and manage chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Stress and isolation can often be an underlying cause of acute and chronic conditions, such as increased blood glucose levels and insulin resistance, even in people who follow a healthy diet and exercise regularly.

Has stress affected you? Check all that apply to you:

√ Signs and Symptoms of Stress

- □ Poor concentration
- □ Irritability
- □ Restlessness
- □ Appetite change
- □ Fatigue
- □ Forgetfulness
- □ Aggression
- □ Increased tendency toward drugs, alcohol, etc.
- □ Gastric reflux

√ Long-Term Effects of Stress

- □ Anxiety
- □ Panic Disorder
- □ Decreased Immune System Response
- □ Hyperglycemia
- □ Hypertension
- □ High Blood Cholesterol
- □ Heart Disease
- □ Unhealthy Weight and Obesity
- □ Stomach/Intestinal Ulcers
- □ Depression

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE STRESSED? STRESS:

- Causes a release of energy, in the form of sugar, into the bloodstream
- Keeps the body from producing insulin
- Prevents adequate insulin from being available to let extra glucose into cells
- Causes increased circulating glucose
- Decreases the ability to make good choices for staying healthy
- Can cause irritability, tiredness and confusion

BUT, WHEN YOU MANAGE STRESS, THE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Decreased circulating glucose
- Increased insulin secretion
- Improved insulin sensitivity
- Improved self-care such as fitness, nutrition and routine medical exams
- Improved overall sense of well-being
- Improved social interaction
- Decreased irritability
- Improved concentration

Try including the following tips and techniques to reduce your stress levels and improve your overall well-being:

- Define your support network and use it.
- Make a "done" list – at the end of the day, jot down all of your daily accomplishments, no matter how large or small.
- Forgive yourself, and others, when things go wrong.
- Practice optimism – make sure your support network is full of optimists, too.
- Make time for social events.
- Say "No" when you need to without feeling guilty.
- Express your feelings instead of internalizing them.
- Take a yoga or Tai Chi class.
- Use deep breathing techniques when in a stressful situation.
- Let go of things that are out of your control.
- "Take 20" every day – schedule 20 minutes of peaceful downtime for yourself every day.
- Meditate.
- Accept compliments for your accomplishments.
- Rejuvenate a meaningful relationship.
- Practice positive self-talk.
- Leave work at work/separate who you are from what you do.
- Make a Stress-Reduction Toolkit – include a favorite book, CDs, pictures, humorous cartoons and clippings, and anything else that brings you peace, joy and happiness.

The material contained in this newsletter has been selected to provide general background and useful information regarding stress management. It is not intended to be complete or tailored to your specific needs. You should discuss the information, facts and tips with your doctor. You should not engage in physical activity, which may have injury and health risks associated with it, until you confirm with your doctor that it is appropriate for you. If you experience any pain or discomfort, call your doctor. The material contained in this newsletter is not designed to replace either medical advice or medical treatment.

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