Families Matter



Holiday Stress Relief

Worries about work, money, health care and staying safe on the road during cold and flu season—

If you're feeling overwhelmed, try these ways to notch down your stress yourself. Also ask for help or a referral from your health care team on ways to lower your stress.

Why It Matters

Simply put, stress can kill. People with high levels of chronic stress or psychological distress are more likely to die of various causes, research shows, including of heart disease and stroke.

Chronic stress is also linked to anxiety disorders and major depression. And stress can underlie other problems, such as irritability, sleep disruption, headaches, changes in appetite and gut discomfort.

Fight stress by focusing on your physical and mental health.

- **Get out of the house:** Take a walk in nature and enjoy the sights and sounds.
- **Sleep tight:** Set a regular bedtime and wakeup routine and turn off or dim electronic screens as bedtime approaches.
- **Use your network:** Reach out and connect regularly with family and friends.
- **Put your mind to it**: Explore mindfulness, a type of meditation that focuses your attention on your present experiences without interpretation or judgment.
- **Lean on a furry friend:** Pets may help reduce physiological reactions to stress.
- **Work it out:** Regular physical activity can relieve tension, anxiety and depression and give you an immediate exercise "high."

One Minute Stress Relief

The eye easer. Close your eyes and place your ring fingers directly under your eyebrows, near the bridge of your nose. Slowly increase pressure for five seconds, then gently release. Repeat 2 – 3 times.

The shoulder saver.

Place your left hand on the right side of your neck by your shoulder. Press fingers firmly into the muscle while tucking your chin in toward your chest. Exhale and hold for 10 seconds, release, then repeat on the left side.

The palm pleaser. Lace your fingers together, leaving thumbs free. Slowly knead your left thumb into the palm of your right hand for 20 – 30 seconds. Then repeat on your left hand.

Source: heart.org/bewell



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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY EXTENSION

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Daylight Saving Time & Smoke Detector Check—NOV 6

CHECK SMOKE ALARMS

Make sure there is a working smoke alarm on every level of your
home, inside bedrooms and near sleeping areas.
Test smoke alarms every month.
Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.

CREATE AND PRACTICE A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Create a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
Practice a home fire drill at least twice a year with your family.
Choose a place to meet outside that is a safe distance away from your home.

IN AN EMERGENCY, LEAVE HOME IMMEDIATELY

Make sure your family leaves the home immediately if there is a fire.
Choose the safest escape route. If there is a lot of smoke, get low and crawl out of the house as quickly as possible.
Call 911 after you are a safe distance away from your home.

Parent Tips for those Holiday Family Events and Dinners

Parents need to plan ahead to limit overstimulation on children. Holidays often play havoc with children's daily routines and diets—but it doesn't have to be that way. With a little planning, you can minimize the upset.

1. **Evaluate length and quality.** Limit how long your child must behave. If a whole-day affair is simply too much, plan to arrive just before dinner and leave early. If you are in the habit of hosting, consider taking a year off. Hosting a holiday meal at one's house causes upheaval for a minimum of two days with all the preparations and entertaining. If attending dinner at another family home isn't possible, consider planning a "Just us" Thanksgiving dinner. You may find it much more restful and restorative.
2. **Take two cars, if possible.** This way the in-law parent is free to take home an over-stimulated child, if necessary, and the other parent can stay and finish the holiday with his/her family.
3. **Consider food.** Holidays mean normal mealtimes get changed. Children can get overly hungry and when that happens, their behavior deteriorates. In addition, Thanksgiving dinner often includes rich foods children are unaccustomed to eating; many refuse unfamiliar foods and fill up on sugary treats. You can avoid problems by making sure your child has a healthy meal before you leave for Grandma's house. Another strategy is to bring appetizers yourself (so they arrive on time) and make them kid-friendly and healthy.
4. **Keep bedtimes and naptimes regular in the days preceding the holiday.** If your child is well-rested, your chances of good behavior are better.

Convert Attitude into Action

A small gesture, such as a smile, can lighten the day of the waitress who hands your youngster a glass of milk. A hug for your child's teacher is another attitude action. When she empties the dishwasher, remind your child that this is her action of appreciation for home and food even if she doesn't think so at the time. Thankfulness can also be expressed through homemade goodies. Little acts of kindness are the best way to put gratitude into action.

Practice Gratitude Permanently

Showing thanks and appreciation does not end with the season. Help your child write thank you notes for her Christmas gifts. Preschoolers can dictate their gratitude as you write, or they can draw a picture of appreciation to give to their gift-giver. Also, find opportunities during the upcoming year to

Give kids the rules and options before entering an event or house!



Holiday Spending

1. Make a list now (and check it twice!) You can't guess how much you'll spend until you make a list of everyone you buy for.
2. Determine what you'll spend. This may be tough, but think about each person on your list and set a spending goal. Successful planning begins with determining a final total for all your gifts. Make sure that your numbers are realistic and achievable.
3. Budget is the name of the game. Ideally, planning should begin at the first of the year. Take the grand total, dividing it by 12 and depositing that amount in your bank account each month. You would be very prepared come holiday shopping time. But, it's not too late to start your holiday budget now: Just divide your gift total by the number of months left until shopping time and save that amount each month.
4. Keep funds separate. It's not a great plan to mingle your every day money and your gift savings.
5. Shop ahead. One of the best ways to keep your budget in line is to shop for your gifts throughout the year.

Source: www.duquoin.com/lifestyle/family/



Everyday Organizing Tips

Constantly picking up family members' belongings—
Create a Clutter Jail. When family members leave their "stuff" in clutter-free zones, put the items in a box or plastic bin you've designated the Clutter Jail. The culprits must post bail (doing chores, losing allowance or TV/Internet time, or paying $1) before they get back their belongings.

Sorting laundry— Buy white, light-colored and dark baskets at the $$ store. Stick them in your closets. When a basket is full, do that load—no sorting needed.

Clutter in your home is an energy "zapper",
deal with it before the hustle and bustle "zaps" you too!

To put this rule into practice make three piles.

Pile #1: Deal with it, is for anything that needs to be acted on immediately (bills to be paid, messages to be returned)

Pile #2: Is for things not as urgent but needs to be saved, such as bank statements, receipts, etc. Label the sections in this pile by subject, month and category – whatever works best for you.

Pile #3: Pitch it, is for things to be thrown away. Once the clutter is gone, the cleaning can begin.

Create an Out the Door Center—

Near the door, place a tub, basket or shelf to keep all items needed as family members head out the door in the morning. Examples: purse, backpacks, school papers, etc.

**Hooks are better then surfaces for keeping things clutter free!
Not as easy to drop things off and only so much fits on a hook!!**

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY EXTENSION

Thanksgiving Games!

Fork Looms!

Give each child a plastic fork. Tie a piece of yarn to one tine of each fork. Show the children how to wrap the yarn in and out around the tines of the fork! Quick & Easy right before the meal!

Measuring & Pouring

If the kitchen is much too busy Thanksgiving Day, let your child use measuring cups and spoons to scoop and fill bowls and cups. Use a tub filled with popcorn or cotton balls!

Counting Corn!

Keep them busy counting corn. Put corn kernels in a clear plastic container with a lid. Have the children ask family members to guess how many corn kernels are in the container. Once everyone has taken a guess; the kids can count the corn kernels to see whose guess was the closest.

Family Album

This is a great time to start a family album for your kids. Have the kids take pictures of everyone in the family using a Polaroid or digital camera. Once the pictures are printed, they can glue the pictures on pieces of folded white paper to make a book. Then help them write who each person is and how they are part of their family.

One Pot Wonders

One-pan or one-pot recipes aka "one-pot wonders" are a great way to speed up your dinner routine. It is easy to see the appeal in throwing ingredients into one pot and letting them simmer while you take care of other things. While the prep work is usually quick, the cooking times for this style can vary. Examples include casseroles, soups/stews, pastas, foil-wrapped meals, and many more.

Last Minute Chili

- 1 can beans, low-sodium, undrained*
- 1 can corn, drained**
- 1 15 oz. can crushed tomatoes, undrained
- Chili powder to taste

*Bean Variations: 15.5 oz. can of kidney, pinto, red, or black

**Corn Variations: 15 oz. or 10 oz. package of frozen corn

1. Place the contents of all 3 cans into a pan.
2. Add chili powder to taste. Stir to mix.
3. Continue to stir over medium heat until heated thoroughly

Calories: 129, Fat: 1g, Sat. Fat: 0g, Cholesterol: 0mg, Sodium: 418 mg,
Carbs: 27g, Fiber: 6g, Protein: 6g

Chicken and Rice

- 1 can carrots, drained, about 15 oz.
- 1 cup cooked chicken, about 5-6 oz.
- 1/2 chicken bouillon cube (or 1/2 tsp. instant chicken bouillon granules)
- 1/2 dried basil (optional)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup white rice (cooked)
- 1 cup low-sodium green peas, about 8.5 oz, drained

1. Combine carrots, chicken, bouillon and ½ cup water in medium-size saucepan.If using basil, add that too. Bring to boil.
2. Stir in rice; then add peas. Remove from heat.
3. Cover and let stand 2 minutes. Stir gently and serve

Nutrition Summary for 1 serving (1 cup) Calories: 230, Total Fat: 2g, Sat. Fat: 1g, Cholesterol: 35mg, Sodium: 412g, Carbs: 33g, Dietary Fiber: 6g, Protein: 19g