

## Address Your Stress

### Breathe and relax

Breathing patterns change under stress, becoming more rapid and shallow. To slow things down, find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Focus only on your breathing. Each time you breathe out, relax your body. Continue for a few minutes until you feel calm and relaxed.

### Develop skills

Not knowing what to do in certain situations can cause stress, but you can prepare yourself to handle such events. For example, you can learn skills to deal with conflict, study for exams, or find a job. Ask someone to help you develop the skills you need.

### Change your thinking

How you think about stress can make a difference. For example, over-blaming yourself or thinking that nothing goes right can make stress even worse. Instead, picture a positive outcome. Even though something may be going wrong it is possible to get through it.

### Stay connected

Keeping in touch with supportive friends and family is good for your health and helps manage stress. Talk about what's going on in your life with friends, family and adults you trust.

### Get some help

Worry and stress are hard on your body and hard on your life! Good help is available through your school and support or counselling services in the community. Call them. Use them.



Health Link Alberta: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)



[www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

## Stressed?



### It's what you do about it

Stress is a normal part of life. Some situations are more stressful than others. It's what you do about it that makes a difference to your well-being.

## Assess Your Stress

If your stress gets out of control or lasts for too long, it can have a negative impact on your mental health.

Take this quiz\* to find out how you're responding to the events in your life.

• Regret being angry or short-tempered with others?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Feel like your emotions are getting the best of you?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Use alcohol, cigarettes or drugs (prescription, over-the-counter or street drugs) to cope with stress?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Have sleep problems (either can't fall asleep, or can't get enough restful sleep)?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Feel like things in your life are overwhelming or out of control?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Laugh or smile less than you used to?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Yell, cry or withdraw a lot?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Feel sad, disappointed or worried?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Eat too much (or too little) when you're stressed?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Hate admitting that you're not in control of your life?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Have trouble "letting go" of things that are bothering you?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Have too little time for family, friends, exercise, relaxation or hobbies?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
• Over-blaming yourself or thinking that nothing goes right?	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Rarely

If you've checked "often" or "sometimes" in four questions or more, it may be time to address your stress.

\* This quiz is for information and awareness purposes only. It is not a diagnostic tool. A high score simply means you are feeling stressed.



## Address Your Stress

Stress is a normal part of your life and you can't always control the situations that surround you. You can decide how you are going to react and how you will prevent stress from taking control of you.

### Do some detective work

Pinpoint the sources of your stress so you can deal with it. Talk things through with a friend or keep a journal to help you find out what situations are causing you stress. Then do something about it.

### Take action

Not being in control of a situation can add to the stress you are feeling. Think about the steps you can take to deal with the stressful situation, then take action.

### Get physical

Exercise can help relieve your stress. Take a walk, stretch, shoot some hoops with a friend or do an activity you like to do. Regular exercise will help you cope with stressful situations in the future.

### Eat well...Be well

A well-nourished body gives you more resources to manage stress. Enjoy the taste experience of different vegetables, fruit, whole-grain foods, and protein-rich meat. Drink lots of water and cut down on the sugar and caffeine (in pop, coffee and tea).

