

Stress and teens

We all thrive under a certain amount of stress. Deadlines, competitions and challenges add a level of stress that keeps us active. Our goal should not be to eliminate stress but to learn how to manage it and how to use it to help us.

The key to managing stress is to achieve balance and to determine what your tolerance level is.

A certain amount of daily stress is normal and necessary. Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life. Stress can help move us to action.

Each person handles stress differently. Some people are comfortable in situations that may seem stressful to others. A major life decision, such as a career change or purchasing a new home can be overwhelming for some, while others may welcome the change. The key to managing stress is to achieve balance, determine what your tolerance level is, and learn how to manage the stress in your life.

Symptoms of stress

The effects of stress can be both physical and emotional. If you think you may be experiencing too much stress, here are signs to look for:

- Difficulty sleeping.
- Digestion problems.

- Tension headaches, backaches, stomachaches or other physical discomforts.
- Rise in blood pressure.
- Anxiety.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs, including smoking cigarettes.
- Changes in your eating behaviors (under-eating or overeating).
- Isolation.
- Irritability.

Teenagers and stress

Being a teenager can be difficult and the years of adolescence can be very stressful. When teenagers become overwhelmed by stress, it can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness or poor coping skills, such as drug and/or alcohol use.



Teens may experience stress due to:

- Problems with friends and/or peers at school.
- Separation or divorce of parents.
- Changes in their bodies.
- School demands and frustrations.
- Negative thoughts and feelings about themselves.
- Taking on too many activities or having too high expectations.
- Chronic illness or severe problems in the family.

Family and friends can help

If your teen is dealing with too much stress, you can help by:

- Listening carefully and watching for overload.
- Using stress management skills yourself.
- Supporting your teen's involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Getting together so that you can talk about what's going on in your lives.

Contact us

Your program provides access to tools and other resources online or call us directly to speak to a professional counselor who is available everyday and at any time to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.

Resources

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.