

FOR OUR PATIENTS

Newsletter

November 2022



**DALLAS
NEPHROLOGY
ASSOCIATES**
*Kidney Care Excellence
Since 1971*

Stress. Adapt and Manage for a Better Quality of Life

What is Stress?

Stress is a normal and natural reaction to situations beyond your control. If left unmanaged, these feelings can become overwhelming and lead to anxiety. Learning to effectively adapt and manage your stress can improve your overall health.

Physical and Psychological Sides of Stress

Stress can cause physical symptoms. Your body senses stress as danger. A flood of hormones is released and the result is the “fight or flight” reaction. You might experience an increase in your heart rate, high blood pressure, sleeping problems, muscle pain or soreness. When you experience too many stressors, this constant flood of hormones can take a toll on your health.

There are psychological symptoms from too much stress as well, including depression, anxiety or anger and can lead to panic attacks, poor choices and isolation.

Can I simply eliminate stress?

There is no way to avoid stress. Life is full of stressful situations. Everyone is different in what causes them stress, however, you can create a plan on how to adapt and manage your stress.



Helpful Hints on Managing Stress

It is impossible to avoid stress. Here are some helpful tips on adapting and managing your stress.

1. Maintain a positive outlook. Remember that stress is inevitable and you can adapt and manage. Know that how you feel today will not be how you feel tomorrow.
2. Care for your body by eating a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, and low in salt and fat.
3. Schedule time to relax and unwind. If your mind is constantly on the go, try relaxing with yoga, meditation or prayer or one of the many “calming” apps that are available for smartphones.
4. Take time out. A quick 5 minute listen to either your favorite song or podcast can help you relax.
5. Don't forget to schedule a vacation or staycation. Put away the electronics and really relax and reconnect.
6. Talk over your problems with a friend, family member, spiritual leader or healthcare provider. Many insurance companies offer mental health services that are available online.
7. Stay present in the moment. Dwelling on the past or worrying about the future is a sure way to increase your stress levels.
8. Maintain a regular sleep routine even on the weekends or days off.
9. Avoid numbing the stress with alcohol or drugs.
10. Get moving! Exercise and movement increase the release of dopamine, the “feel-good” hormone. Take a walk, dance or play with the kids or grandkids. Be creative in finding ways to move your body.

Did You Know that November is National Caregivers month?

A caregiver is one who gives the gifts of love and help to another. During this busy, stressful holiday season, make sure to care for yourself as well as your loved one.

1. Break problems or tasks into smaller steps. Sometimes it helps to complete one-step and then move to the next.
2. Accept help. Have a list of ways that others might be able to help you and, when they offer, accept.
3. Focus on what you are able to do. It is easy to feel guilty or overwhelmed when a new problem comes up. Believe that you are doing your best. No one is perfect.
4. Stay connected. Set aside time each week, even if it is only 15 minutes, for a walk or phone call with a friend.
5. Take care of yourself. Keep up with your health and medical appointments. Take a nap when you can.



Dallas Nephrology Associates thanks and honors all caregivers this November and all year round.

Stress Eating

Do you mindlessly reach for chips and sugar-filled snacks when you are stressed? Research shows that these fat-filled, salty, sugary food substitutes can be addictive and can easily become a bad habit. To combat emotional eating, practice paying attention to your body's cues and decide if you are really hungry. If instead, you are feeling sad, mad, bored or even lonely, recognize that you are emotionally eating. Stop and distract yourself with a healthier alternative.



Additional Patient Services That Can Help Beat Stress

Medical Nutrition Therapy

Are you on a special diet because of your CKD? Holidays can be hard for anyone trying to make healthier food choices and even harder if you are on a “limited” diet. Ask your doctor if Medical Nutrition Therapy is right for you. The registered dietitian nutritionists at DNA are here to help you be successful!

Supportive Care

Having a chronic disease like CKD can cause a lot of stress and worry, especially if your wishes are not in line with your treatment plan. At DNA, we want to know what matters most to you. Our Supportive Care Team can help with resources, advance directives, and help you coordinate additional care.

CKD Patient Education Program and CKD Treatment Options Clinic

Getting educated about CKD will help you reduce your stress. At DNA we have educational classes for every level of CKD. Our free group class “CKD and Me” is available for all patients at most DNA clinics. We also offer CKD stage 4 patients individual workshop classes on a variety of topics. If you are nearing dialysis and feel stressed about all the important choices you need to make, ask about attending our CKD Treatment Options Education Clinic. This hands-on class can help you sort through the options. Take control and ask your office about scheduling one of these educational visits.

Patient Navigators

Our Patient Navigators support our later stage CKD patients by working closely with your DNA healthcare team. We provide you and your family with support through treatment plans and patient care programs.

RESOURCES

For more information, scan the QR code with your smart phone to visit these online resources:

National Kidney Foundation - Stress and Your Kidneys

An explanation of what stress is, how it affects your health and ways to manage it.



Anxiety & Depression Association of America

Coping strategies for stress as well as links to webinars with other helpful resources on how to manage stress and anxiety and keep it under control.



John Hopkins Medicine - 4 Mindful Tips to Destress This Holiday Season

Find great tips on how to keep your stress under control while you enjoy time with family and friends this holiday season.



Squeeze balls are a simple way to release stress. Take a deep breath while simply squeezing the ball, feel the tension in your arm, then relax your arm, release your breath and your tension.

Live a Healthier Life

Stress management and your ability to adapt to stress are important in balancing your life. Part of living with any chronic disease including CKD is finding ways to cope with feelings like stress. Managing your stress can help you feel better and live a healthier life.

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