

Manage Your Stress

Too much stress is bad for anyone's health—children included. Stress is a major factor behind high blood pressure, high blood sugar, weight gain, insomnia, and depression. How can you manage the stress in your life? This brochure provides tips for children and their parents/caregivers.



Durham Regional Hospital

DUKE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

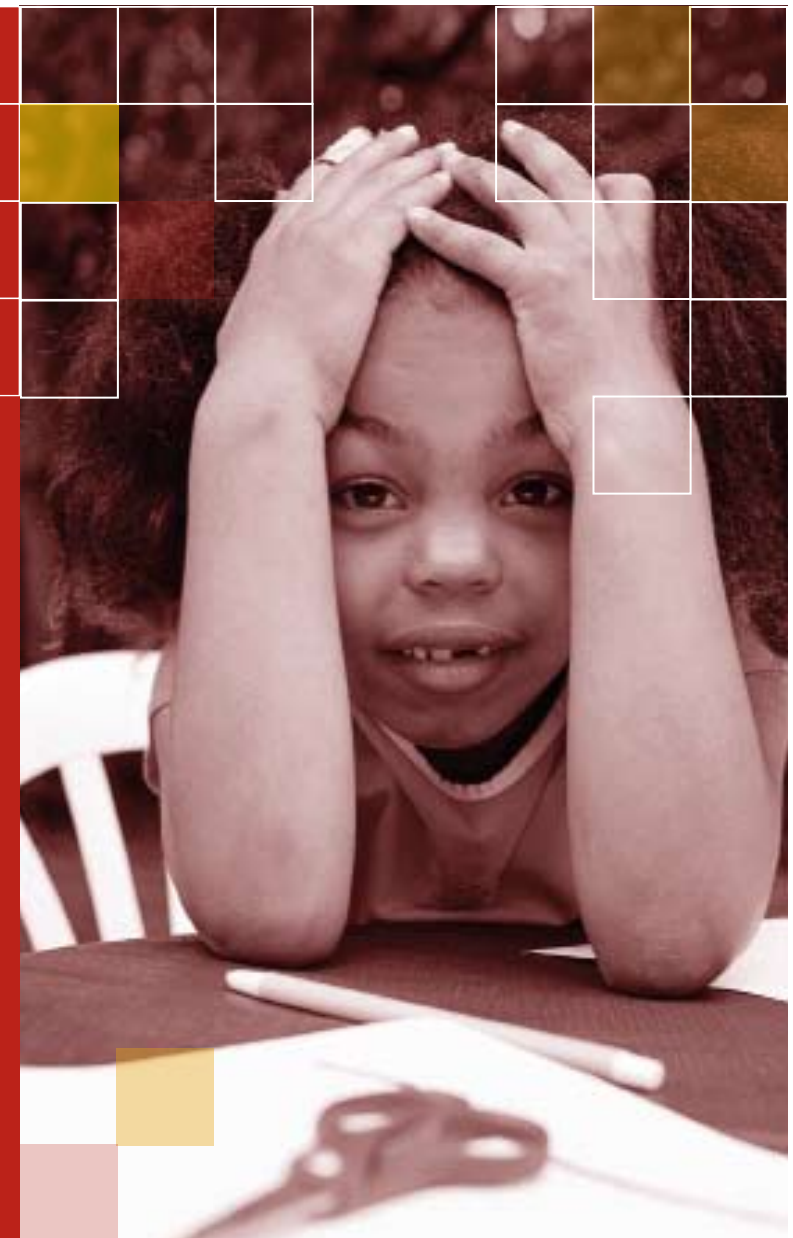
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For more than 30 years, Durham Regional Hospital has been serving the health care needs of Durham, Orange, Person, Granville, and surrounding counties. Our mission is to care for our patients, nurturing the sick and strengthening the well, and to improve the health of the communities we serve. As part of Duke Medicine, Durham Regional Hospital is dedicated to providing exceptional medical care with the personal touch and convenience only a community hospital can offer.

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Investigate
HEALTH!

Stress

Children

Possible triggers for stress:

- Separation from parents
- Academic pressure
- Feeling the need to fit in with peers
- Disturbing images on TV (such as plane crashes and war)
- Death of a loved one
- Divorce

Symptoms of stress:

- Mood swings
- Acting out
- Nightmares
- Bed-wetting
- Stomachaches
- Trouble concentrating or completing schoolwork

Signs of stress:

- New habits, such as thumb-sucking or hair-twirling

The Centers for Disease Control's health campaign for children—BAM! Body and Mind Your Life—recommends these tips to help kids keep cool, calm, and collected:

- Put your body in motion. Physical activity is one of the most important ways to keep stress away.
- Fuel up. Stop and eat regular meals.
- LOL! Did you know that it takes 15 facial muscles to laugh? Lots of laughing can make you feel good.
- Have fun with friends. Being with people you like can help you work through your problems and see the bright side of things.
- Take time to chill. Finding time to relax can make all the difference.
- Catch some zzz...Getting the right amount of sleep is important, especially for kids. Because your body is changing and developing, it requires more sleep.
- Keep a journal. It is a good idea to write things down in a journal to get stuff off your chest.
- Lend a hand. It is almost impossible to feel stressed out when you're helping someone else. Helping others makes you feel better.

Parents and caregivers

There are all sorts of things or events that can make someone feel stressed. The triggers for stress vary depending upon the individual. What may be stressful for one person isn't for another. Stress can cause insomnia, depression, headaches, anger, or fear. While you cannot control all the outside events in your life, you can change how you handle them emotionally.

The American Heart Association offers these tips for coping with stress:

- Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and think of a peaceful picture.
- Talk out your troubles and look for the good instead of the bad in situations.
- Engage in physical activity regularly.
- Limit alcohol.
- Eat healthy meals.
- Learn to say no.

Research

To learn about the latest research on stress, visit the Web sites of the National Institute of Mental Health (nimh.nih.gov), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (cdc.gov/niosh), or the American Academy of Pediatrics (aap.org).

