



## FROM THE DIRECTOR



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Welcome to our first newsletter publication, providing an additional resource for you.

Since high stress levels are a recurrent theme that interferes

with children's learning and wellness, we have dedicated this issue to stress busting tools for the entire family. We hope to see you at our Stress Busters seminar in March!

## TAMING STRESS

What impacts everything we do, from school performance to job productivity, and even competition on the athletic field? The common factor is stress! Stress represents an increasing problem among children and adults of all ages. When out of control, stress leads to disease, poor health, and poor school performance.

Stress is one's response to activities of daily living including physical, emotional and intel-

lectual demands. Stress is not necessarily all bad, as some stress actually challenges us to work harder. For example, the athlete ready to compete against a tough opponent uses stress to push her to a higher level of performance. Along the same lines, feeling a little stressed before an exam or presentation, may motivate one to study harder or spend more time in preparation. Having an optimal balance of stress and using it for motivation is actually

healthy and works towards one's success.

What happens when stress turns from motivation to a nauseous feeling of overwhelming doom? Under these circumstances, stress quickly leads us down the path to unhealthy behaviors and eventually poor health. This is the familiar stress that we all would like to ignore. However, this uncontrolled stress throws our lives in a state chaos and turmoil. How do

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## ASK DR. CHRIS

Q. My daughter started college this past fall and she complains that her hair is falling out? There are no balding areas, but her hair is definitely thinner. Is this caused by stress?

A. Loss of hair can be a sign of stress. In fact, this is not uncommon among college students due to rigorous schedules. If your daughter has not done

so already, she should visit her primary care doctor and discuss this concern. Although this may be caused by stress, there are other illnesses that can lead to hair loss. When visiting her doctor, she should review her nutrition, exercise, and sleep habits, as well as share how she manages the stress of college life.



**Exercise** is a great stress buster and even a ten minute walk offers stress relief.

## TAMING STRESS (continued)

we know when we are entering this danger zone of grueling stress that sucks the life from deep within our weary bones and what can we do to tame it?

The key here is to make stress work for us by balancing stress levels with healthy coping skills. For example, it is essential to first recognize a stress imbalance. Some signs of exhausting stress include:

- Negative thoughts
- Poor memory
- Boredom
- Lack of concentration
- Sleep problems
- Headaches
- Teeth grinding
- Muscles aches
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Mood swings
- Loss of confidence

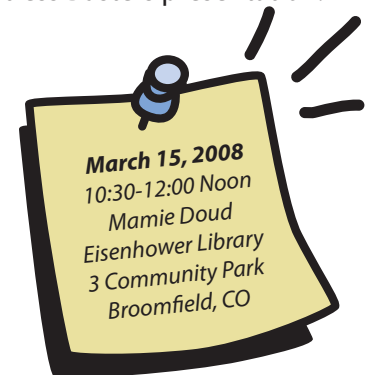
What coping skills does one use

to reverse these symptoms of out of control stress? Many effective strategies exist. The goal is to adopt positive strategies to take control of stress. It is important to first accept the challenge to change behaviors with the idea that you are in control of stress and your response to stress. Look at your coping responses and replace negative behaviors like procrastination, poor nutrition, and smoking with positive ones, like planning ahead, taking care of your body, and accepting challenges. Try to find the positives in each stress event. For example, an exam can be an opportunity to excel or a report for work serves as a learning opportunity.

To be in control of stress, individuals must practice strategies that support the body and mind. Eating a balanced diet with fresh fruits and vegetables provides high octane fuel for our bodies to function under stress. Exercise is a

great stress buster and even a ten minute walk offers stress relief. Deep breathing and relaxation techniques help relieve stress in all ages. Since caffeine and alcohol actually produce anxiety, limiting intake of these is essential to control stress. Planning and organizing in advance with effective time management tools, also represents an important stress buster strategy.

Remember stress impacts the success of every adult and every child and each of us can use stress to our advantage. To learn how to control stress, join us for the Stress Busters presentation:



## RECIPE CORNER

Eating a good breakfast is a great stress buster, so try this recipe with your family.

### Whole Wheat Waffles

- 2 eggs
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups 1% or nonfat milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup melted butter
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon honey

Beat eggs until fluffy. Add milk, butter, honey, and beat. Add flours, baking powder and mix. Pour batter into center of hot waffle iron. Makes about four, eight-inch waffles. Top with fresh fruit, yogurt or pure maple syrup!

### One Minute Stress Strategy

1. Take a deep breath, expand abdomen fully
2. Hold breath for 3 seconds
3. Let your breath out all at once
4. As you exhale, relax your jaw and shoulders
5. Relax

Healthy Learning Paths is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to providing educational programs for children, parents, childcare providers, and educators to inspire a love of lifelong learning and a balanced healthy lifestyle that nurtures the whole child.

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