

Partnering with Patients to Manage Stress

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CAPSULE

Exposure to stress, especially chronic stress, is associated with a host of unhealthy behaviors that affect cardiovascular health.

To manage stress, some individuals may turn to drug or alcohol use, excessive amounts of time online, sleeping too much, or other short-term coping mechanisms, all of which may worsen cardiovascular health and diabetes control.¹⁻³

Partnering with patients to help them effectively cope and manage their stress ultimately can contribute to enhanced quality of life and improved health outcomes.²

Screening and providing treatment for mental health comorbidities, such as depression, anxiety, or substance use disorders, can minimize the severity of stress that patients experience.

For more information, access Cardi-OH's expanded resource on **screening for and managing stress**.

Stress Management Recommendations

Below are some suggestions that may help your patients cope with stress.³

Avoid drugs and alcohol

While these substances can produce short term effects that initially appear to be helpful, they have addictive properties and may lead to additional stress and other health problems.



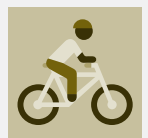
Connect with others

A strong, positive social network can provide support when times are hard. Spend quality time with the ones you love. If you do not have many trusted people in your life, try joining a volunteer group, fitness center, or other community group to meet new people and create a support network for yourself.



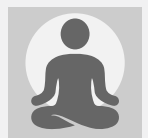
Exercise

Exercise can produce endorphins, which are chemicals in the body that help improve your mood. Exercise improves sleep and reduces symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. Even a ten-minute walk can positively impact your mood and reduce stress.



Meditation

Meditation is a practice that is used to calm and clear the mind. There are different types of meditation, many of which have shown a benefit to lowering blood pressure.



Sleep

Getting enough good sleep is important for managing stress and for brain health. Try to get a minimum of seven hours of sleep each night.



References

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3. American Heart Association. How Can I Manage Stress? <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Answers-by-Heart/How-to-Manage-Stress.pdf>. Published October 2023. Accessed January 20, 2025.

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