

# Reduce Stress



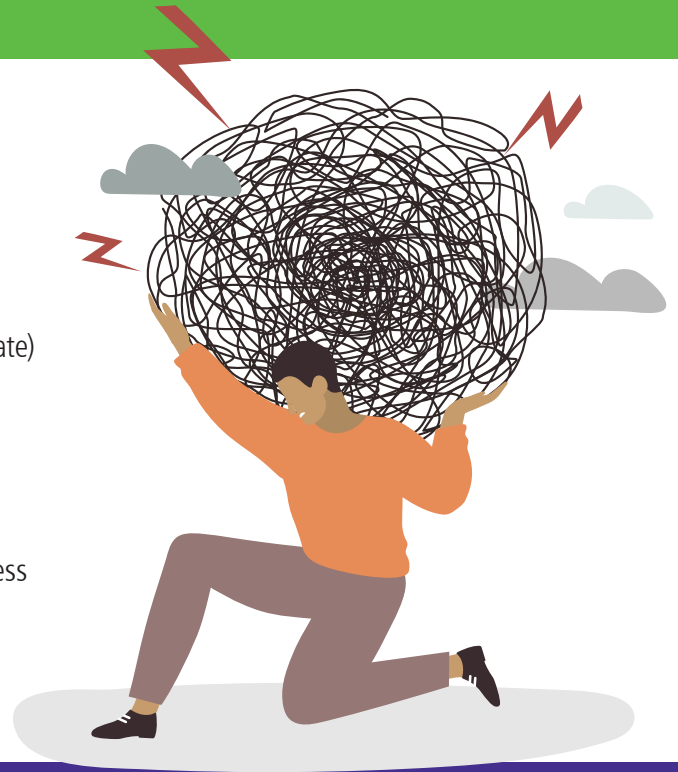
## Learn how stress affects the body and healthy ways to cope

### Where Stress Comes From

Stress is a common mental and physical response to new, uncertain, or threatening situations. In a stressful time, you may notice changes in how you think, feel, and act. Common causes are:

- Too much to do and not enough time
- Lots of little problems in the same day (like a traffic jam or running late)
- Having an argument
- Not knowing what the future will bring

Everybody feels stress. Stress can sometimes be helpful in dealing with problems, it can motivate us and help us grow. But over time, too much stress is harmful for your health. You can take steps to manage your stress and work towards positive change.



### How Stress Affects the Body



Each person feels and responds to stress in their own way. Common signs of stress are:

- Feeling fear, anger, sad, worry, numb, or frustrated
- Changes in your appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Trouble focusing or making choices
- Trouble sleeping or having nightmares
- Headaches, body pains, stomach problems, or skin rashes
- Your chronic health problems and mental health issues are getting worse
- Using more alcohol, smoking and vaping, using illegal drugs (like heroin or cocaine), and misusing medicine (like opioids)

For more information call Customer Service at **1(415) 547-7800** or visit **[sfhp.org/health-ed](https://sfhp.org/health-ed)**

24/7 Nurse Advice Line **1(877) 977-3397** | Talk to a doctor 24/7 **[sfhp.org/teladoc](https://sfhp.org/teladoc)**



## Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

Taking steps to manage stress can help you cope and feel ready to do what you can. Here are some ways you can manage stress:

- ✓ **Take breaks** from news stories and/or social media on your phone, TV, and computers. Set limits on your apps to manage how often you use them. It is okay to disconnect from your devices.



- ✓ **Care for your body** by eating healthy foods and drinking plenty of water, getting enough sleep, and staying active. Learn more and get tips with our fact sheets on **Eating Healthy** and **Moving More**.



- ✓ **Get enough sleep.** Try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each day. Wind down at night by turning off your phone, laptop, TV, or any blue light 1 hour before bed. Drink something warm such as herbal tea with no caffeine. Avoid caffeinated drinks like coffee and caffeinated soda. Adults need 7 or more hours of sleep each night.

- ✓ **Try relaxing techniques** such as deep breathing, meditation, tai chi, or yoga. Visit [sfhp.org/wellness](https://sfhp.org/wellness) to find a wellness class online or near you. You can use many tools online or on smartphone apps. Download the Insight Timer app or visit [insighttimer.com](https://insighttimer.com) for free guided meditations and workshops led by teachers around the world.



- ✓ **Talk with people** you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Talk with your community or faith-based organizations. You can call CalHOPE Connect which offers safe, secure, and culturally sensitive emotional support. A community mental health worker can give you support with stress, anxiety, depression, and any other worries you face. CalHOPE protects your information. They do not need your full or last name, address, or phone number. You can chat online at [calhopeconect.org](https://calhopeconect.org) or call the CalHOPE 24/7 warmline at **1(833) 317-4673**.





## Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress (continued)



**✗ Avoid smoking, vaping, and other tobacco products.** You can get Nicotine Replacement Treatment (NRT) at no cost with Medi-Cal. Learn more with the **Quitting Smoking and Vaping** fact sheet.

**✗ Limit how much alcohol you drink to 1-2 drinks per day, if any.**

Drinking may lead to feeling relaxed, in the short term. But problems will arise when stress is ongoing, and you cope with it by drinking alcohol. Instead of “calming your nerves,” long-term, heavy drinking will work against you. It can lead to many medical and mental health problems. It also increases your risk for alcohol dependence. Talk with your primary care provider\* (PCP) if you need help with alcohol use.



**✗ Avoid using illegal drugs or prescriptions** in ways other than directed by your PCP. If you feel you need help with alcohol or any drug use, you can call the San Francisco Behavioral Health Services (SFBHS) 24/7 Access Help Line at **1(415) 255-3737** or **1(888) 246-3333** (toll-free). Or call the SFBHS TTY line at **1(888) 484-7200**.

*\*Your primary care provider is the doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner in charge of your health care.*





## Get Help if You Need It



### Carelon Behavioral Health

If your stress doesn't go away or gets worse over time, talk with your PCP. If you have Medi-Cal, you can talk with a behavioral health specialist at no cost with Carelon Behavioral Health. Call **1(855) 371-8117** to learn more or make an appointment.

### 24/7 Teladoc®

You can use Teladoc to talk with a doctor 24/7 over phone, smartphone app, or video. Teladoc is free and you can get care from a doctor for non-emergency problems. Learn more at [sfhp.org/teladoc](https://sfhp.org/teladoc) or call **1(800) 835-2362**.



### 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



Remember, you are not alone. If you are thinking about suicide, call **988** for the **24/7 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**. You can also chat online at [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat) or send a text message to **988**. It is free and confidential. A skilled, trained crisis worker will talk with you, provide support, and share resources that may help.



#### You do not have to be suicidal to call. Reasons to call can be:

- Substance use
- Financial worries
- Relationships
- Sexual identity
- Illness
- Getting over abuse
- Depression and mental illness
- Loneliness

For Spanish, call **1(800) 628-9454**.

For TTY, dial **711** then **988**. Get support when you need it.



#### Resources:



Rethinking Drinking  
National Institute of Health  
[nih.gov](https://nih.gov)



Coping with Stress  
[cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)



Community Stress Fact Sheet  
ATSDR  
[cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)



The Link Between Stress and Alcohol  
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism  
[nih.gov](https://nih.gov)

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