

Developing Strategies to Overcome Stress in Your Weight-Wellness Journey

Living with obesity and other health conditions can be stressful. Dealing with stressful situations can add up quickly and become a problem when stress starts to affect your quality of life. By paying attention to sources and symptoms of stress—and learning about when mental health professionals might help—you can take steps to feel better.

What is stress?

Stress is a feeling we have when the demands placed on us start to impact our ability to manage them. Here are a few examples:

- Problems in your relationships with family members, colleagues, or friends.
- Not having time to take care of yourself with everything else you have to do each day.
- Caring for children or other family members.
- Managing your medical conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic pain.
- Worrying about finances.
- Work expectations, effort needed, or deadlines.

Symptoms of stress can include:

- Feeling overwhelmed or withdrawing from parts of your life
- Having headaches or trouble concentrating
- Feeling annoyed, angry, or like your patience is short
- Staying up too late or having difficulty sleeping
- Turning to alcohol, drugs, or other activities that help you “zone out”

Things you can do to manage stress:

- **Talk about how you feel.** Simply being heard and getting emotional support from someone you trust can go a long way.
- **Ask for help.** Communicate what your spouse, colleagues, family members, or friends can do to help you manage everything on your plate. Be specific!
- **Set boundaries.** Find one or two things you can start saying no to—then do it.
- **Aim to get enough sleep.** Create a bedtime routine you can stick with and avoid looking at your phone or other screens in bed.
- **Exercise.** Being active has many health benefits—including stress relief!



How is stress different from a mental health condition like anxiety or depression?

While many symptoms of stress are also symptoms of mental health conditions like anxiety or depression, it is a good time to get help from a mental health care provider if you experience any of the following:

1. You have difficulty working or taking care of yourself, your home, or your family.
2. You feel distressed or worried about your wellbeing.
3. You feel different than what's typical for you.
4. You have thoughts of wanting to harm yourself or others or to escape your life.



If you think you're dealing with a mental health condition:

- **Take it seriously.** Your mental health is a critical part of your overall health and wellbeing. Help is available.
- **Find a mental health care provider to work with.** Talk to your doctor, call your insurance company, or ask your friends for recommendations for a social worker, psychologist, or licensed counselor.
- **If you feel like you are a danger to yourself or others,** call 911 or the National Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Hotline at 988.

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Lilly is proud to support the work of the American Diabetes Association® to address obesity.