

WHAT IS STRESS?



*This information is not a diagnostic tool or substitution for medical advice.
It is intended as information to guide the reader.

3 Types of Stress

POSITIVE/ACUTE

A normal part of healthy development. Heart rate may increase and may occur while starting something new, giving a class presentation or meeting new people.

TOLERABLE

These could be instances where a sudden event occurs. Such as the death of a loved one or experiencing a natural disaster. Recovery from Tolerable stress may take time and additional support from caring adults.

TOXIC

Ongoing exposure to the stressor for a long period of time. Being exposed to abuse or pervasive distressing situations where a person stays in an activated stress response.

HOW TO HELP

Understanding the Stress Response

Our bodies are designed to respond when a threat is near. Our stress response is the natural way our bodies prepare for what is commonly known as: **fight, flight (run away) or freeze (shut down)**. This is the body's amazing ability to protect us from danger. Cortisol (stress hormone) is released which increases blood pressure and heart rate. However, if our bodies are subjected to long term-chronic stress, the cortisol level in the body remains increased which may lead to other health conditions such as anxiety, depression sleep problems & weight gain. Stress cannot be eliminated from our lives, but it can be managed.

How to Help Lower the Stress Hormone

Getting away from a chronically stressful situation may be challenging, especially if you are child. There are ways to help manage the stressful situations at any age:

- **Physical Activity**-go for a walk, bike ride, skateboard etc. Physical activity will relieve muscle tension and enhances breathing.
- **Talk to someone**-making connections to other people and share thoughts & feelings.
- **Laugh**- watch funny memes, videos or movies.

