

## Keep Calm and Set Small Goals

**Stress is a normal physical and emotional reaction to big and small life changes.**

It's okay to sometimes feel overwhelmed. When you consistently feel stressed out, this can lead to a variety of health problems such as ulcers, muscle tension and high blood pressure. Dealing with stress successfully starts with figuring out how stress affects you and when it occurs.

Once you realise that you are stressed, it's time to determine what is triggering your reaction. Stress is typically brought on in one of three ways – temporary problems, major life changes and ongoing problems. Once noticed, you can take small steps to better manage or even lower stress.

### Take Action!

Here are some goals to consider. Choose one and see how you do.

- When you're feeling tense, breathe in and out deeply. Close your eyes and slowly count to ten while you're doing this. This will help you relax and bring your heart rate down.
- Make a list of tasks you need to complete. Pick one and break the task down into a series of smaller steps.
- Think about what makes you stressed and when you feel stressed. Make a list and think about ways to avoid these situations, if possible.

### Easy Ways to Reduce Stress

- ✓ **Sleep.** Sleeping is a great way to help take care of your mind and body. Make an effort to go to bed at a set time each night. Aim for seven to nine hours each night.
- ✓ **Eat right.** Fruits, vegetables, and proteins keep you full and don't make you jittery like caffeine or sugary foods will.
- ✓ **Talk to friends.** Your friends can provide you with emotional support and may even help guide you to a solution.
- ✓ **Take it one step at a time.** When a task seems overwhelming, break it down and take it one step at a time.
- ✓ **Don't deal with stress in unhealthy ways.** This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking, or overeating. Instead, try one of the healthy coping tips already mentioned.

**It can be stressful to take the first step in improving your health. That's why it's important to start small and complete each goal one at a time.**

## Start a New Conversation With Your GP

**Developing an honest relationship with your GP is important.**

To get the best treatment, pick one suggestion to try at your next appointment:

### 1. Be honest.

It can be tempting to tell your GP what you think he or she wants to hear, but it is more important that your GP know the truth. He or she needs to know if you have forgotten to take your medicine, or if your daily habits interact with your medicine.

### 2. Ask questions.

There are no silly questions when it involves your health. Whether you have a question about your diagnosis, your medicine, or a procedure your GP has recommended, any time you don't understand, ask for an explanation.

### 3. Ask your GP to repeat information and instructions.

Health care can be complicated. Keep asking for explanations until you understand. One of the best ways to make sure you understand your GP's answer is to repeat it in your own words. Say, "Let me see if I understand..." then tell your GP what you think he or she said.



# Get Activated for a Healthier You

## Start With a Single Step!

**Making your health a priority is not always easy.** Stress can get in the way of taking better care of your health and it can be hard to eat well, be active and take care of yourself. The key is to start small towards something that's manageable for you.

The good news is that nurturing better health is a bit like growing a garden. It takes a little time and care, but the rewards are worth the effort! And you can take charge of your health one small step at a time.

The first step is to become aware of your own habits and to understand what factors in your life get in the way of taking care of your health.



## Changing Your Diet Step By Step

Small steps are the key to success! Here are some simple ways to eat healthy:



Use a slightly smaller plate or bowl during mealtimes.



Don't eat directly out of food packages--take out the amount you'd like to eat and put the rest away.



Avoid eating buffet style. Keep serving bowls away from where you eat and out of reach for more helpings.



Avoid eating while watching the telly or staying busy with other activities. This will help you better realise when you're feeling full.

### Other Useful Tips...

- ✓ Eat your meals at home on a smaller plate and wait before going back for seconds.
- ✓ Eat slowly so your brain can receive signals that your stomach is full.

### Take Action!

Here are a few goals to consider. Choose one and see how you do.

- At least once in the coming week, increase your servings of vegetables. Enjoy a large salad for lunch, for instance.
- At least once in the coming week, replace a less healthy snack (crisps, biscuits, chocolate) with a piece of fruit or another healthy snack.
- At least once in the coming week, replace a high sugar drink like a Coke with a healthier option such as water, fruit juice without sugar added or vegetable juice.