Managing Stress

Guide to Reading

- **Building Vocabulary**
  Look up the meaning of the word stress. As you read the lesson, write down examples of how you think this definition relates to the other vocabulary terms.
  - stress (p. 156)
  - positive stress (p. 156)
  - distress (p. 156)
  - stressors (p. 157)
  - fight-or-flight response (p. 157)
  - adrenaline (p. 157)
  - fatigue (p. 157)

- **Focusing on the Main Ideas**
  In this lesson, you will be able to
  - recognize sources of stress.
  - describe the body’s reaction to stress.
  - list effective strategies to avoid and manage stress.

- **Reading Strategy**
  Predicting: Look over the major and minor headings in this lesson. List two topics that you think will be covered in the lesson.

Quick Write

Write a few sentences briefly describing a time when you felt stress. How did you manage your feelings?

- Getting up in front of others can be stressful for some people. What are some other sources of stress for teens?

What Is Stress?

Mario is worrying about his math test. He feels nervous and impatient. This is stress, the body’s response to real or imagined dangers or other life events. Stress is an everyday experience, felt by all people at all ages. While you cannot get rid of all stress completely, you can learn to deal with it effectively.

Stress can be positive or negative. Positive stress is stress that can help you reach your goals. For example, you may feel positive stress when you try out for the school play or join a sports team. This stress makes you feel excited and ready to face a new challenge. Distress, or negative stress, is stress that prevents you from doing what you need to do, or stress that causes you discomfort. Getting into an argument with a friend may make you feel distressed. You may also feel distressed if you moved and had to make new friends at a new school.

Reading Check

Explain what is the difference between positive stress and distress?
What Are Stressors?

You're running behind on a school project. It's almost time for you to give your big speech. These situations are possible stressors, or sources of stress. Common events like being late for class or playing a solo during a concert may cause you to feel stress. More significant events that cause stress might include death, divorce, a move, a serious illness, or the loss of a friendship.

Different people find different situations stressful. For example, you may find it easy to make friends at a new school, while someone else may feel stressed about it.

**Reading Check** Define What are stressors?

The Body's Response to Stress

Your body responds to all stressors by getting ready to act by either fighting the stressor or fleeing from it. The body's way of responding to threats is known as the fight-or-flight response. As your body prepares for action, it releases adrenaline, a hormone that increases the level of sugar in the blood, giving your body extra energy. Adrenaline also increases your heart rate and blood pressure. More blood flows to your brain and muscles, which tense for action. Your breathing gets faster, and your air passages expand so you can take in more air. Your senses sharpen, making you extra aware of your surroundings.

After a stressful situation, you may feel fatigue, or tiredness. This occurs because your body directed much of its energy into the fight-or-flight response. You can relieve fatigue by sleeping or resting, stretching, and breathing deeply.

Avoiding Stress

Sometimes you can avoid stressful situations. For example, your mornings might tend to be rushed. You can avoid this stress by planning ahead and getting up earlier. Other stressors result from exciting events that you don't want to avoid, such as performing in a piano recital. Still other stressors are unavoidable, such as taking a test or giving an oral report. You can deal with these types of stressors by being prepared and managing your time effectively. Give yourself some extra time in your schedule in case something happens that you didn't plan for. Don't overschedule yourself with too many activities and commitments.

**Reading Check** Name What are two actions you can take to help avoid stress?

▲ There are many ways of coping with fatigue. What are two other ways teens can handle their fatigue?
Strategies for Managing Stress
Managing stress is a key part of mental/emotional health. **Figure 5.2** lists some strategies for managing stress.

**Healthy Strategies for Managing Stress**
Thoughts and actions determine how well you manage stress. How can thinking positively help you manage stress?

- Get Enough Sleep
- Eat Nutritious Foods
- Be Physically Active
- Talk with Others
- Use Your Time Wisely
- Relax
- Think Positively

**Lesson 4 Review**

**After You Read**
Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

**What I Learned**

1. **Vocabulary** Define stress.
2. **Describe** What is the fight-or-flight response?
3. **Give Examples** Give two examples of positive stress.
4. **Explain** What are three healthy strategies for managing stress?

**Thinking Critically**

5. **Analyze** Do you think life today is more stressful than it was for your parents? Why or why not?
6. **Hypothesize** Why might adrenaline have been more important to human survival in the past than it is today?

**Applying Health Skills**

7. **Advocacy** Write an article for the school newspaper in which you discuss common stressors in teens' lives. Suggest healthful ways for teens to relieve stress.