

**Remember to relax.**

- Set aside time each day for relaxation.
- Try deep breathing techniques or meditation.
- Devote time to enjoyable hobbies and activities.
- Avoid being frustrated.

**Manage your time.**

- Set priorities and try doing less.
- Try making “to do” lists.
- Do not put off doing things that are important to you.
- Give yourself enough time to complete tasks.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish.

**Develop good health habits.**

- Exercise regularly, get plenty of rest, and eat well-balanced meals.
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and caffeine.
- Take medications as directed by your health care provider.
- See your health care provider if you are worried about the effects of stress.

**Laugh and rely on your sense of humor to help you cope.**

- Try to find humor in difficult situations.
- Look for ways to lighten daily pressures, such as reading comic strips.
- Avoid overexposure to media coverage of life’s most serious problems.

**R**EMEMBER that problems can seem much larger under stress. The pressures of dealing with terror alerts or continuing to cope with the World Trade Center disaster can add to the stress you already feel in your life. Be sure to take care of yourself and manage your stress.

If you find you are having trouble with managing stress, or if you would like to strengthen the way you cope, call:

**1-800-LIFENET**

LIFENET will help you to find resources to cope.



*Project Liberty, which has offered free and confidential services to anyone affected by the World Trade Center disaster and its aftereffects, is committed to mental health promotion and wellness. Project Liberty was created by the New York State Office of Mental Health with support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Center for Mental Health Services.*

# Coping

with stress  
related to  
terrorist alerts

For many Americans, terrorist alerts are a sign of how our world has changed because of the September 11 disaster. For some of us, terror alerts may be another important source of stress in our daily lives. Learning to recognize and deal with stress will help us to stay healthy and well.



**STRESS IS** your body's response to some type of demand. Not all stress is bad. If you have a work deadline, for example, a small amount of stress can help you to complete the tasks and do a good job. When you feel overwhelmed by stress, however, it can have negative effects.

**SIGNS OF STRESS** appear as physical or emotional responses to “stressors.” Stressors are the things that cause our responses to stress. A stressor, for example, might be a change in the terror alert level. Other examples of common stressors are important life events, such as losing or starting a job, getting married or divorced, having difficulty paying bills, or having a child with special needs. Stress can also affect us day to day, from missing a doctor's appointment because of heavy traffic or feeling frustrated when tasks are not completed because too many are scheduled.

## Physical signs of stress

### **Stress that comes and goes quickly might cause:**

- Rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Sweating and cold, clammy hands
- Upset stomach and dry mouth
- Muscle tension and an inability to relax

### **If physical stress continues, you might find that you:**

- Eat more or eat less
- Have trouble sleeping or getting enough sleep
- Pace, talk too much, bite nails or have other nervous habits
- Catch a cold or come down with the flu
- Feel run down or tired most of the time

## Emotional signs of stress

### **Over the short term, signs may include:**

- Feeling distracted or unable to concentrate
- Being angry, frustrated or impatient
- Making poor decisions
- Feeling unable to laugh and feeling less joy

### **With long-term stress, you may find that you are feeling:**

- Constantly worried, nervous or upset
- Preoccupied with thoughts related to the source of stress
- Depressed and isolated from family and friends
- Dependent on drugs, tobacco or alcohol to cope

## Managing stress

**ALL OF US** show some signs of stress in our lives. It is normal. If you have a number of signs, however, you may need to spend some time on learning how to manage your stress. Too much stress can have negative effects on your health. Some tips for managing stress include:

### **Deal with your feelings in a healthy way.**

- Talk about your feelings with others.
- Find positive ways to deal with anger, such as taking a brisk walk.
- Be patient with yourself and others.
- Know what you can and cannot do and accept your limits.
- Ask for help when you need it.