

Week 8

Manage Stress

With today's hectic lifestyles, high stress levels have become the norm, rather than the exception. Studies have shown that everyday pressures can contribute to an increased risk of breast cancer, **high blood pressure** and diminished health and wellness.

Stress doesn't directly cause high blood pressure, but when life gets stressful, people react in different ways that can cause blood pressure to rise.

- **Overeating or eating unhealthy (comfort) foods**
- **Smoking**
- **Drinking alcohol in excess**
- **Lose sleep**

You may not be able to avoid stress in your life, but you can control how you react to it!

There are many techniques you can try and incorporate into your lifestyle to help you better manage stress. Don't limit yourself to just one!

- Take/make time to relax. Set aside 15-20 minutes each day to sit quietly. Relaxing for short periods during the day may help lower your blood pressure.
- Activities such as walking, swimming, riding a bike can help to let go of tension in your body.
- Deep-breathing exercises (breath in calm...breath out tension...)
- Meditation/Yoga
- Playing/listening to music
- Journaling
- Organize, give yourself enough time to get things done.

Remember, stress-reducing activities alone won't help if you have a negative attitude. Work towards a positive mental attitude about life and situations as they come up. It sounds simple, but the simple approach is usually the one that works.

Only you can decide: Is the glass half full or half empty?