PLANK 5

TOOL: Stress Management and Blood Pressure (Henry Ford Health System)

Stress

Everyone has stress. Most of the time, it is hard to avoid stressful situations. However, we can focus on healthy ways to cope with stress. This may help to prevent your blood pressure from going too high.

Preventing High Stress

Experts recommend trying to balance out your life to avoid getting easily stressed out. You can do this by getting enough sleep at night, slowing down during the day, getting organized, and remembering to laugh instead of cry. They also find that daily physical activity, talking with family and friends, and volunteering helps people stay calm during stressful situations.

Positive Self Talk

One simple thing you can do to help cope with stress is to practice positive self talk. It may seem silly at first, but changing your thoughts from “I can’t...” to “I can and I will...” can truly make a difference. Try to practice when you are not stressed so that it makes it easier to do so when you are stressed.

More Ways to Cope with Stress

Recommended by the American Heart Association, here are examples on coping with stress:

- Count to 10 before you speak.
- Take three to five deep breaths.
- Walk away from the stressful situation for five minutes to think it over.

- Accept the fact that sometimes you just need to say “I’m sorry”.
- Set your watch five to ten minutes ahead of time to avoid being late.
- Break down large problems into smaller parts.
- Smile more often.
Enjoying Daily Hobbies

The American Heart Association also says finding hobbies that you enjoy and doing them on a daily basis can help you to stay calm in stressful situations. Try some of these:

- Start an art project
- Read a book or newspaper
- Have coffee with a friend
- Play golf or tennis
- Listen to music
- Take a nature walk
- Take a class at your local community college

Start a Plan

*What will you do to help manage your stress?*

1. I will try to do something to help balance out my life to deal with stress better, such as getting 8 hours of sleep at night, eating healthy, or being physically active every day.
2. I will use positive self talk at least once a day.
3. I will remember to use a strategy to cope with stress listed on the other side of this sheet.
4. I will spend 15 minutes every day doing a hobby I enjoy.
5. I will practice daily relaxation, such as deep breathing, or another relaxation technique.
6. I will ________________________________.

For more information, talk to your doctor or visit our webpage at [www.henryfordlivewell.com](http://www.henryfordlivewell.com).