



Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: Feb. 21, 2022
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Signs of stress in youth and how to help

It's easy to feel overwhelmed these days.

But stress can take both a physical and mental toll no matter what age you are. Recognizing the symptoms of stress and knowing how you feel and how your body reacts can help you manage your stress and stressors.

Everyone reacts to stress differently. Youth often deal with unique stressors that adults in their life may miss or not understand.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused stress for many, too. Here are other common causes of stress in youth:

- time pressures
- more responsibility
- sexual identity
- sexual orientation
- divorce or separation of parents or close family members
- worrying about the future
- bullying and abuse, friends, peer pressure, and teasing
- relationships with parents
- homework deadlines and tests
- pleasing parents, teachers, and friends
- relationships and dating
- how they look and self-esteem
- death or illness in the family
- not understanding why they feel the way they do
- not understanding how puberty changes the way you think and how your body changes

In fact, while potentially dealing with their own stress, children and teenagers also notice and react to stress in their family and the people around them. Recognizing and managing stress in children and teenagers early on can lead to healthy coping strategies that will help them into adulthood.

Think your child might be stressed? Some tell-tale signs include:

- Eating and sleeping problems
- Nightmares
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Low self-esteem
- Anger and rebellion.

If you're a parent or caregiver of a child or youth, here are a few suggestions that may help:

- Help create a low-stress environment at home.
- Work with your child to help them develop positive coping skills.
- Whenever possible, acknowledge your child's feelings. If appropriate, reassure them that you can understand why they would feel sad or scared.
- Be an active listener. Being an active listener develops trust and demonstrates that you are supportive and understanding of your child's concerns.
- Allow your child to try and find their own solutions, if appropriate, but offer to help and be available if they need you.
- Aim to provide a good example for them. Create plans to reduce stress, and share them with your family.
- Provide them with some control. Allow your children to make choices within your family framework. For example, allow them to arrange their room, choose family activities, and help make family decisions.

Together, you can help your child manage their stress and become happier, healthier adults.