


**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama provides the Stress Management Tool Kit to help your employees learn to recognize and cope with stress.**

## Stress Management Tool Kit: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



**Coping with Stress**

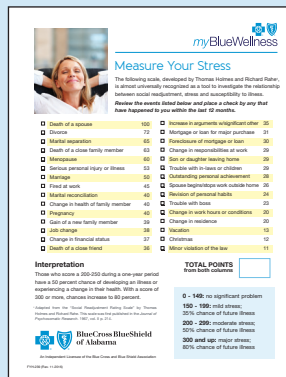
When experienced over a long period of time, stress can damage your health. Chronic stress has been linked to many health conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease and asthma. It can also impact your sleeping habits, mood and overall quality of life. While the events and situations that trigger stress may be unavoidable, you do have the power to control your response. By learning ways to manage stress-causing situations effectively, you can not only improve your health, but your life.

**Use these tips to help manage stress:**

- Exercise, take a brisk walk or try yoga.
- Take progressive relaxation.
- Take short breaks from the computer, which is sometimes called "tally breathing."
- Make a list of stressors and priorities - putting them on paper can release anxiety you may feel about the number of tasks on your to-do list.
- Practice healthy eating habits.
- Try meditation, counseling or attending to a quiet area.
- Get a massage.
- Use positive self-talk.
- Take time to learn and/or develop a hobby.
- Foster friendships and a social support network - it is important to have someone to talk to.
- Slow down and simplify your life.
- Try counseling regularly, especially those that focus on changing your way of thinking.

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Coping with Stress: FYH-238



**Measure Your Stress**

The following scale, developed by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, is almost universally recognized as a tool to investigate the relationship between social readjustment, stress and susceptibility to illness. **Please rate the events listed below and place a check for any that have happened to you within the last 12 months.**

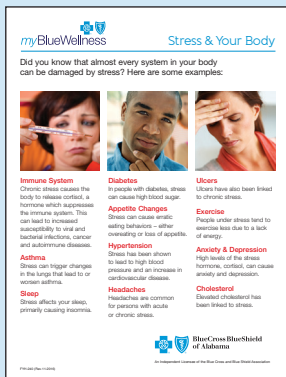
Event	Score	Event	Score
Death of a spouse	100	Marriage or loss of major purchase	21
Divorce	73	Change in residence or work	19
Marital separation	65	Start or change leaving home	18
Death of a close family member	63	Travel with illness or children	17
Marital status change or threat	53	Outstanding personal achievement	16
Change in family structure	47	Spouse begins/ends work outside home	15
Marital reconciliation	40	Decision of personal habits	14
Change in health of family member	40	Travel with stress	13
Change in family structure	39	Change in residence	12
Loss of a new family member	38	Change in financial status	11
Change in family structure	37	Change in financial status	10
Death of a close friend	36	Major violation of the law	9

**Interpretation:** Those who score a 300-250 during a one-year period have a 50 percent chance of developing an illness or experiencing a change in their health. With a score of 250 or more, the chance increases to 80 percent.

**0 - 149: no significant problem**  
 150 - 199: mild stress  
 200 - 249: moderate stress  
 250 - 299: severe stress  
 300 and up: major stress  
 80% chance of future stress

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Measure Your Stress: FYH-239



**Stress & Your Body**

Did you know that almost every system in your body can be damaged by stress? Here are some examples:

**Immune System**  
Chronic stress causes the body to release cortisol, a hormone which suppresses the immune system. This can lead to increased susceptibility to viral and bacterial infections, cancer and autoimmune diseases.

**Diabetes**  
In people with diabetes, stress can cause high blood sugar.

**Appetite Changes**  
Stress can cause erratic eating behaviors - either overeating or loss of appetite.

**Hypertension**  
Stress has been shown to lead to high blood pressure and an increase in cardiovascular disease.

**Asthma**  
Stress can trigger changes in the lungs that lead to or worsen asthma.

**Sleep**  
Stress affects your sleep, primarily causing insomnia.

**Headaches**  
Headaches are common for persons with acute or chronic stress.

**Ulcers**  
Ulcers have also been linked to chronic stress.

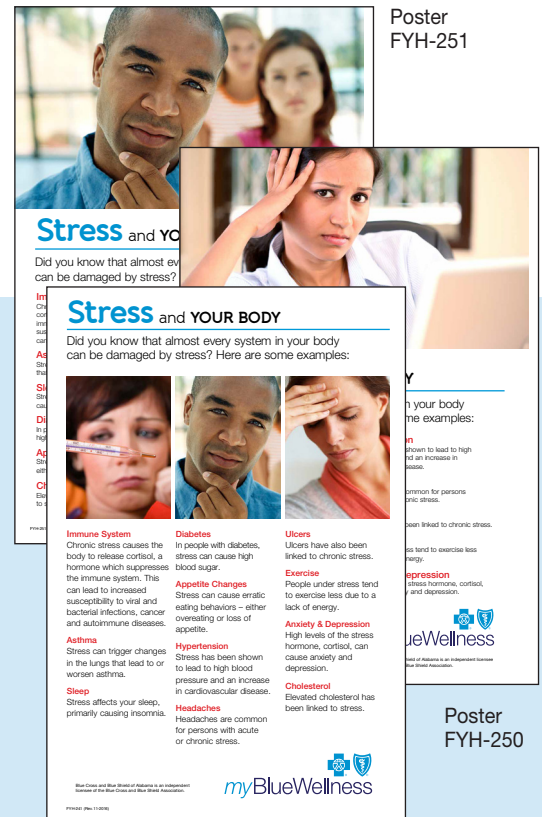
**Exercise**  
People under stress tend to exercise less due to a lack of energy.

**Anxiety & Depression**  
High levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, can cause anxiety and depression.

**Cholesterol**  
Elevated cholesterol has been linked to stress.

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Stress & Your Body: FYH-240



**Stress and YOUR BODY**

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Poster FYH-241

Poster FYH-250

**Here are a few suggestions to help you use these materials in your workplace.**

Every workplace is different, so find out what works best for you.

☒ Present and discuss the materials in an educational workshop.

☒ Another very simple option is to display the posters in your breakroom and distribute the handouts to your employees.

**Ordering additional materials is easy!**

1. Go to **AlabamaBlue.com/employers**.
2. Select **"Forms and Materials."**
3. Enter the stock number to download or order.

Title	Stock No.
<i>Coping with Stress</i> - handout.....	FYH-238
<i>Measure Your Stress</i> - handout.....	FYH-239
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - handout .....	FYH-240
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-241
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-250
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-251



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