

Note to Families:

HealthSmart “Time to Talk” activities will help you engage family members in important health conversations.

Time to Talk



Skills for Dealing with Stress



When to Talk

It’s always best to talk when things are calm. Physical activity is a good way to reduce stress. So taking a walk with your son or daughter can be a great time to talk about stress management techniques. Your son or daughter practiced some of these techniques in class.



What to Say

Things to Ask:

- How often do you feel stressed?
- What types of things cause stress for you?
- What do you do to deal with stress?
- What are some of the stress-management techniques you’ve learned?
- How can I help you reduce or deal with your stress?

Things to Share:

- Stress is part of everyday life.
- Being organized, setting priorities and planning ahead can help reduce stress.
- There are techniques people can use to reduce stress.
- I am willing to talk with you about stress any time you need to.

How to Do Deep Breathing

- Sit in a comfortable position and take some deep breaths.
- Breathe in for a count of 6. Pause for a count of 3. Breathe out for a count of 6.
- Do this 20–30 times.

How to Do Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Go from one muscle group to another, tensing for 5 seconds, and then relaxing.
- Start with your toes and work your way up your body.
- Notice how your body feels as you tighten and relax the different muscles.



Things to Know

- When you’re under stress, muscles tense and breathing becomes shallow and rapid.
- Deep breathing increases the amount of oxygen available to the body and produces a relaxed feeling.
- Progressive muscle relaxation uses the technique of tensing and then relaxing different groups of muscles to help reduce heart rate, blood pressure and respiration.
- Your son or daughter learned and practiced deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation in class and can show you how to do them.
- Modeling healthy behavior is important. When you are experiencing stress yourself, stop and practice the deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation techniques. Combining these two techniques further increases your ability to deal with stressful situations.