

Stirred Water Herbs

"Do you want to get well?" John 5:6

Pregnancy Basics



Judi Ryan, ND
Doctor of Naturopathy

Stirred Water Herbs

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Hello, I'm Dr. Judi,

I am a wife of 19 years and the mother of 7 children ages 18 to 2. I was raised knowing nothing about herbs or natural health care. As my children grew and had continual health issues I reached a point where I was going to the medical doctor at least once a week. I remember thinking there had to be a better way. I knew God had to have a purpose for the things that grew around us so I began my voyage in Naturopathy.



Naturopathy is based on the belief that God has designed the human body with the ability to heal itself, if it is given the appropriate internal and external environment.

I was certified as an herbalist in August of 2001 through Natural Solution Training Institute and became a Doctor of Naturopathy through Trinity College of Natural Health, April 19, 2004.

I can't diagnose, prescribe medication, or treat, but my education has greatly benefited my own family. We only see medical doctors in emergencies and when necessary, which is not very often any more.

I want to pass on what I've learned to help benefit as many people as possible both online and in my community. So we began Stirred Water Herbs to help you create that environment and take control of your health.

[Stirred Water Herbs](#) is a Christian owned business which strives to provide you with the best vitamins and herbs available. I look hard for great quality so you don't have to. I also strive to keep the cost down to prove that treating yourself or your family naturally doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. My concern is your health, not our bottom line. We are dedicated to serving others as God intended.....NATURALLY!

May God bless you through our family owned business and may you come to know the Creator more fully as you experience the best health you possibly can!

If you're looking for an alternative to modern medicine or wonder if the Naturopathy way may address a need you have, you can email me at AskDrJudi@stirredwater.com.

Dr. Judi

John 5:6

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#) 5

[Body Changes](#) 6

[Digestive Difficulties](#) 10

[Stretch Marks and Other Skin Changes](#) 12

[Sleeping Troubles](#) 13

[When to Call the Doctor](#) 14

[Exercise and Pregnancy](#) 15

[Stress and Your Health](#) 18

Disclaimer

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The purpose of this report is to help educate. The author and publisher do not warrant that the information contained in this report is fully complete and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions.

Pregnancy can be a thrilling and special part of your life. But it can also be a little scary. If this is your first baby, you might have questions about what to do and what not to do. What do I need to eat? Will I be tired all the time? Will I have stretch marks? These questions are normal. But try to enjoy this journey one step at a time! You can do simple things to keep both you and your baby happy and healthy.



One half of all pregnancies are not planned!

It's important for you to be as healthy as you can be, all the time. Many women don't know they are pregnant during the first few weeks of their pregnancy. Take action now to manage any of your current health problems. Then you can help reduce any health risks to you and your baby.

If you know you are pregnant, or think you might be, call your doctor or midwife and set up a visit. You will need to visit your doctor or midwife many times during your pregnancy. Follow their schedule for visits and don't miss them!

You will notice your body is changing in many ways. These changes may be strange at first, but they are all normal. Try to stay as healthy as you can—for you and your new baby! You can take these actions:

- Learn about the benefits of breastfeeding your baby.
- Stop smoking, drinking alcohol, and doing drugs! These behaviors can cause long-term damage to your baby. Ask your doctor or midwife for help or talk with someone you trust, such as a member of your faith community, a counselor, or a friend.
- Keep eating a healthy diet. Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and calcium-rich foods. You need 1000 milligrams (mg) of calcium per day. If you are 18 or younger, you need 1300 mg of calcium each day. Your body is giving a lot of its calcium to your baby's growing bones. Drinking at least eight glasses of water a day can help keep you and your baby healthy. Avoid eating a lot of fatty foods such as butter, fatty meats, mayonnaise, and high-fat snack foods. Choose foods lower in fat such as fat-free milk or yogurt, low-fat milk or yogurt, chicken and turkey without the skin, and fish.
- Don't eat uncooked or undercooked meats or fish. They can make you sick.
- Limit caffeine from coffee, tea, sodas, medicines, and chocolates.
- Take at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to help prevent certain types of birth defects. Your doctor may prescribe a daily vitamin that has folic acid. Eat foods high in folic acid like orange juice, other citrus fruit and juices, leafy green vegetables, beans, peanuts, peas, and whole-grain products.

This report covers basic tips and helps related to pregnancy.

Body Changes

Aches, pains, and backaches

As your uterus expands pains in the back, abdomen, groin area, and thighs often appear. Many women also have backaches and aching near the pelvic bone due the pressure of the baby's head, increased weight, and loosening joints.

To ease some of these aches and pains try:

- Lying down
- Resting
- Applying heat

If you are worried or the pains do not get better, call your doctor.

Breast Changes

A woman's breasts increase in size and fullness during pregnancy. As the due date approaches, hormone changes will cause your breasts to get even bigger in preparation for breastfeeding. Your breasts may feel full and heavy, and they might be tender or uncomfortable.

In the third trimester, some pregnant women begin to leak colostrum from their breasts. Colostrum is the first milk that your breasts produce for the baby. It is a thick, yellowish fluid containing antibodies that protect newborns from infection. If leaking becomes embarrassing, put nursing pads inside your bra.

Try to these tips to stay comfortable:

- Wear a soft, comfortable maternity or nursing bra with extra support.
- Wash your nipples with water instead of soap. Soap can dry and irritate nipples. If you have cracked nipples, use a heavy moisturizing cream containing lanolin.

Dizziness

Many pregnant women complain of dizziness and lightheadedness throughout their pregnancies. Fainting is rare but does happen even in some healthy pregnant women. There are many reasons for these symptoms. The growth of more blood vessels in early pregnancy, the pressure of the expanding uterus on blood vessels and the body's increased need for food all can make a pregnant woman feel lightheaded and dizzy.

To feel better follow these tips:

- Stand up slowly.
- When you're feeling lightheaded, lay down on your left side.
- Avoid sitting or standing in one position for a long time.
- Eat healthy snacks or small meals frequently.
- Don't get overheated.

Call your doctor or midwife as soon as possible if you faint. Dizziness or lightheadedness can be discussed at regular prenatal visits.

Hemorrhoids

Up to 50% of pregnant women get hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoids are swollen and bulging veins in the rectum. They can cause itching, pain and bleeding.

Hemorrhoids are more common during pregnancy for many reasons. During pregnancy there is a huge increase in the amount of blood in the body. This can cause veins to enlarge. The expanding uterus also puts pressure on the veins in the rectum. Plus, constipation can make hemorrhoids worse. Hemorrhoids usually improve after delivery.

Follow these tips to help prevent and relieve hemorrhoids:

- Drink lots of fluids
- Eat plenty of fiber-rich foods like whole grains, raw or cooked leafy green vegetables, and fruits
- Try not to strain for bowel movements
- Talk with your doctor or midwife before taking any laxative.
- Talk to your doctor or midwife about using witch hazel or ice packs to soothe hemorrhoids.

Leg Cramps

At different times during your pregnancy, you might have cramps in your legs or feet. They usually happen at night. This is due to a change in the way your body processes, or metabolizes, calcium.

Try these tips to prevent and ease leg cramps:

- Eat lots of low-fat calcium-rich foods.
- Get regular mild exercise, like walking.
- Ask your doctor or midwife if you should be taking a prenatal vitamin containing calcium.
- Gently stretch the muscle to relieve leg and foot cramps. If you have a sudden leg cramp, flex your foot towards your body.
- Use heating pads or warm, moist towels to help relax the muscles and ease leg and foot cramps.

Nasal Problems

Nosebleeds and nasal stuffiness are common during pregnancy. They are caused by the increased amount of blood in your body and hormones acting on the tissues of your nose.

To ease nosebleeds blow gently when you blow your nose. Stop nosebleeds by squeezing your nose between your thumb and finger for a few minutes. If you have nosebleeds that do not stop in a few minutes or happen often, see your doctor or midwife.

Drinking extra water and using a cool mist humidifier in your bedroom may help relieve nasal stuffiness. Talk with your doctor or midwife before taking any over-the-counter or prescription medicines for colds or nasal stuffiness.

Shortness of Breath

As the baby grows, your expanding uterus will put pressure on all of your organs, including your lungs. You may notice that you are short of breath or might not be able to catch your breath.

Tips to ease breathing include:

- Take deep, long breaths.
- Maintain good posture so your lungs have room to expand.
- Use an extra pillow and try sleeping on your side to breathe easier at night.

Swelling

Most women develop mild swelling in the face, hands, or ankles at some point in their pregnancies. As the due date approaches, swelling often becomes more noticeable. If you have rapid, significant weight gain or your hands or feet suddenly get very puffy, call your doctor or midwife as soon as possible. It could be a sign of high blood pressure called preeclampsia or toxemia.

To keep swelling to a minimum:

- Drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of fluids (water is best) daily.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Try to avoid very salty foods.
- Rest when you can with your feet elevated.
- Ask your doctor or midwife about using support hose.

Teeth and Gums Problems

A pregnant woman's teeth and gums need special care. Pregnant women with gum disease are much more likely to have premature babies with low-birth weight. This may result from the transfer of bacteria in the mother's mouth to the baby during pregnancy. The microbes can reach the baby through the placenta (a temporary organ joining the mother and fetus which supplies the fetus with blood and nutrients), through the amniotic fluid (fluid around the fetus), and through the layer of tissues in the mother's stomach.

Every expectant mother should have a complete oral exam prior to or very early in pregnancy. All needed dental work should be managed early, because having urgent treatment during pregnancy can present risks. Interventions can be started to control risks for gum inflammation and disease. This also is the best time to change habits that may affect the health of teeth and gums, and the health of the baby.

Remember to tell your dentist that you are pregnant! You can ease bleeding gums by brushing with a soft-bristled toothbrush and flossing at least twice a day. Get more details on taking care of your teeth and gums during pregnancy.

Varicose Veins

During pregnancy there is a huge increase in the amount of blood in the body. This can cause veins to enlarge. Plus, pressure on the large veins behind the uterus causes the blood to slow in its return to the heart. For these reasons, varicose veins in the legs and anus (hemorrhoids) are more common in pregnancy.

Varicose veins look like swollen veins raised above the surface of the skin. They can be twisted or bulging, and are dark purple or blue in color. They are found most often on the backs of the calves or on the inside of the leg.

Try these tips to reduce the chances of varicose veins:

- Avoid tight knee-highs or garters.
- Sit with your legs and feet raised when possible.

Digestive Difficulties

Constipation

Many pregnant women complain of constipation. High levels of hormones in your pregnant body slow down digestion and relax muscles in the bowels leaving many women constipated. Plus, the pressure of the expanding uterus on the bowels boosts the chances for constipation.

Try these tips to stay more regular:

- Eat fiber-rich foods like fresh or dried fruit, raw vegetables, and whole-grain cereals and breads daily
- Drink eight to ten glasses of water every day.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, colas, and some other sodas), since caffeine makes your body lose fluid needed for regular bowel movements.
- Get moving. Mild exercise like walking may also ease constipation.

Heartburn and Indigestion

Almost every pregnant woman experiences indigestion and heartburn. Hormones and the pressure of the growing uterus cause this discomfort. Pregnancy hormones slow down the muscles of the digestive tract. So food tends to move more slowly and digestion is sluggish. This causes many pregnant women to feel bloated.

Hormones also relax the valve that separates the esophagus from the stomach. This allows food and acids to come back up from the stomach to the esophagus. The food and acid causes the burning feeling of heartburn. As your baby gets bigger, the uterus pushes on the stomach making heartburn more common in later pregnancy.

Try these tips to prevent and ease indigestion and heartburn:

- Avoid greasy and fried foods.
- Eat six to eight small meals instead of three large meals.
- Don't gain more than the recommended amount of weight.
- Take small sips of milk or eat small pieces of chipped ice to soothe burning.
- Eat slowly.
- Ask your doctor if you can take an antacid medicine.

Nausea

Morning sickness and nausea are common in pregnant women. Most nausea occurs during the early part of pregnancy. In most cases this discomfort improves when you enter the second trimester. For some women, morning sickness and nausea might last longer, even for the entire nine months.

The changes in your body can cause nausea and vomiting when:

- you smell certain things,
- you eat some foods,

- you are tired,
- you are stressed,
- or for no apparent reason

You may be able to reduce nausea by changing when and what you eat. Try these tips:

- Eat smaller meals, such as six to eight small meals instead of three larger ones each day.
- Take prenatal vitamins with a meal for best results and nausea prevention
- Don't go for long periods of time without eating.
- Drink fluids between, but not with, meals.
- Drink Spearmint or Peppermint tea to help with nausea.
- Avoid foods that are greasy, fried, or highly spiced.
- Avoid strong, foul and unpleasant odors.
- Rest when you are tired.
- Have snack with water next to bed if nausea occurs during the night.

Weight gain

The amount of weight you need to gain during pregnancy depends upon how much you weighed before you became pregnant. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) women who have a normal weight before getting pregnant should gain 25 to 35 pounds. Women who are underweight before pregnancy should gain 28 to 40 pounds. And women who are overweight should gain 15 to 25 pounds.

Research shows that women who gain more than the recommended amount during pregnancy have a higher chance of being obese 10 years later. Ask your doctor or midwife how much weight gain during pregnancy is healthy for you.

Avoid fast foods, soft drinks, and large amounts of junk foods like chips, ice cream, candy, etc. They are empty calories causing you to gain unnecessary weight with little to no nutrients for you or your baby.

Stretch Marks and Other Skin Changes

Stretch Marks

Worried about the dreaded stretch marks of pregnancy? Just about all pregnant women are. The good news is that only about half of pregnant women get stretch marks.

Stretch marks are red, pink, or purple streaks in the skin. Most often they appear on the thighs, buttocks, abdomen, and breasts. These scars are caused by the stretching of the skin, and usually appear in the second half of pregnancy.

The color of stretch marks depends on a woman's skin color. They can be pink, reddish brown, or dark brown streaks. While creams and lotions can keep your skin well moisturized, they do not prevent stretch marks from forming. Most stretch marks fade after delivery to very light lines.

Other Skin Changes

Some women notice other skin changes during pregnancy. For many women, the nipples become darker and browner during pregnancy. Many pregnant women also develop a dark line (called the linea nigra) on the skin that runs from the belly button down to the pubic hairline. Blotchy brown pigmentations on the forehead, nose and cheeks are also common. These spots are called melasma or chloasma and are more common in darker-skinned women. Most of these skin changes are caused by pregnancy hormones and will fade or disappear after delivery.

Tingling and Itching

Tingling and numbness of the fingers and a feeling of swelling in the hands are common during pregnancy. These symptoms are due to swelling of tissues in the narrow passages in your wrists, and they should disappear after delivery.

About 20 percent of pregnant women feel itchy during pregnancy. Usually women feel itchy in the abdomen. But red, itchy palms and soles of the feet are also common complaints. Pregnancy hormones and stretching skin are probably to blame for most of your discomfort. Usually the itchy feeling goes away after delivery.

In the meantime, try these tips to feel better:

- Use thick moisturizing creams instead of lotions on your skin.
- Use gentle soaps.
- Avoid hot showers or baths that can dry your skin.
- Avoid itchy fabrics and clothes.
- Try not to get over-heated. Heat can make the itching worse.

Rarely, itchiness can be a sign of a serious condition called cholestasis of pregnancy. If you have nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, jaundice, or fatigue with itchiness, call your doctor or midwife. Cholestasis of pregnancy is a serious liver problem.

Sleeping Troubles

Tiredness

During your pregnancy, you might feel tired even after you've had a lot of sleep. Many women find they're particularly exhausted in the first trimester. Don't worry, this is normal! This is your body's way of telling you that you need more rest.

In the second trimester, tiredness is usually replaced with a feeling of well being and energy. But in the third trimester, exhaustion often sets in again. As you get larger, sleeping may become more difficult. The baby's movements, bathroom runs, and an increase in the body's metabolism might interrupt or disturb your sleep. Leg cramping can also interfere with a good night's sleep.

Also, insomnia can be an indication of a need for calcium/magnesium.

Try these tips to feel and sleep better:

- Take a prenatal vitamin with calcium and magnesium to maintain adequate levels.
- When you're tired, get some rest.
- Try to get about eight hours of sleep every night, and a short nap during the day.
- If you feel stressed, try to find ways to relax.
- Sleep on your left side. This will relieve pressure on blood vessels that supply oxygen and nutrients to the fetus.
- If you have high blood pressure during pregnancy, always lay on your left side when you're lying down.
- Avoid eating large meals three hours before going to bed.
- Get some mild exercise like walking.
- Avoid long naps during the day.

When to Call the Doctor

When you are pregnant you should not hesitate to call your doctor or midwife if something is bothering or worrying you. Sometimes physical changes can be signs of a problem.

Call your doctor or midwife immediately if you:

- are bleeding or leaking fluid from the vagina
- have sudden or severe swelling in the face, hands, or fingers
- get severe or long-lasting headaches
- have discomfort, pain or cramping in the abdomen
- have a fever or chills
- are vomiting or have persistent nausea
- feel discomfort, pain or burning with urination
- have problems seeing or blurred vision
- feel dizzy
- sense a change in your baby's movement
- suspect your baby is moving less than normally after 28 weeks of pregnancy (if you count less than 10 movements in 2 hours or less)

Exercise and Pregnancy

Why Exercise During Pregnancy?

Whether you're pregnant or not, exercise is one of the best things you can do for your physical and emotional health. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that pregnant women without health problems or pregnancy complications exercise moderately for 30 minutes or more on most, if not all, days of the week.

Pregnant or not, exercise helps keep the heart, bones, and mind healthy. Staying active also seems to give some special added paybacks for pregnant women.

Here are some really good reasons to get regular exercise during pregnancy:

- It can ease and prevent aches and pains of pregnancy including constipation, varicose veins, backaches, and exhaustion.
- Active women seem to be better prepared for labor and delivery and recover more quickly.
- Exercise may lower the risk of high blood pressure and diabetes during pregnancy.
- Fit women have an easier time getting back to a healthy weight after delivery.
- Regular exercise may improve sleep during pregnancy.
- Staying active can protect your emotional health. Pregnant women who exercise seem to have better self-esteem and a lower risk of depression and anxiety.

Is Exercise Safe for All Pregnant Women?

No. But for most healthy moms-to-be who do not have any pregnancy-related problems, exercise is a safe and valuable habit. Even so, before exercising during pregnancy talk to your doctor or midwife. She will be able to suggest a fitness plan that is safe for you. Getting a doctor's advice is important for both women who exercise before pregnancy and for those who'd like to start a fitness routine.

Women with the following problems may not be able to exercise during pregnancy:

- heart disease
- lung disease
- obesity
- severe diabetes
- thyroid disease
- seizure disorder
- persistent bleeding in the second or third trimester
- complications with past pregnancies
- premature labor
- pregnancy related high blood pressure

What Type of Exercise is Best During Pregnancy?

Low-impact exercise that requires moderate exertion is probably best. Walking, swimming, dancing and cycling seem to be comfortable and enjoyable activities for most pregnant women.

According to the ACOG, many different types of exercise can be safe for most pregnant women. They do recommend following these guidelines when choosing a pregnancy exercise plan:

- Avoid activities in which you can get hit in the abdomen like kickboxing, soccer, basketball or ice hockey.
- Steer clear of activities in which you can fall like horseback riding, downhill skiing, and gymnastics.
- Do not scuba dive during pregnancy. Scuba diving can create gas bubbles in your baby's blood that can cause many health problems.

What Guidelines Should I Follow?

Follow these tips to have safe and healthy work-outs:

- When you exercise, start slowly, progress gradually, and cool down slowly.
- You should be able to talk while exercising. If not, you may be exercising too intensely.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Don't exercise on your back after the first trimester. This can put too much pressure on an important vein and limit blood flow to the baby.
- Avoid jerky, bouncing and high-impact movements. Connective tissues stretch much more easily during pregnancy. So these types of movements put you at risk of joint injury.
- Don't exercise at high altitudes (more than 6,000 feet). It can prevent your baby from getting enough oxygen.
- Make sure you drink lots of fluids before, during and after exercising.
- Do not work-out in extreme heat or humidity.
- If you feel uncomfortable, short of breath or tired take a break and take it easier when you resume exercise.

How Will I Know if I'm Overdoing It?

Stop exercising and call your doctor or midwife as soon as possible if you have any of the following:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Calf pain or swelling
- Abdominal pain
- Blurred vision
- Fluid leaking from the vagina
- Vaginal bleeding
- Decreased fetal movement
- Contractions

How Can I Prepare my Body for Labor and Delivery?

Pelvic floor exercises or Kegel exercises can help prepare your body for delivery. The pelvic floor muscles support the rectum, vagina, and urethra in the pelvis. Strengthening these muscles by doing Kegel exercises may help you have an easier birth. They will also help you avoid leaking urine during and after pregnancy.

Pelvic muscles are the same ones used to stop the flow of urine. Still, it can be hard to find the right muscles to squeeze. You can be sure you are exercising the right muscles if when you squeeze them you stop urinating. Or you can put a finger into the vagina and squeeze. If you feel pressure around the finger, you've found the pelvic floor muscles.

Kegel Exercises

- Tighten the pelvic floor muscles for 5 to 10 seconds, relax for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 20 times, 3 times a day.
- You can do Kegel exercises standing, sitting, or lying down.

Stress and Your Health

What are some of the most common causes of stress?

Stress can arise for a variety of reasons. Stress can be brought about by pregnancy, a traumatic accident, death, or emergency situation. Stress can also be a side effect of a serious illness or disease.

There is also stress associated with daily life, the workplace, and family responsibilities. It's hard to stay calm and relaxed in our hectic lives. Women have many roles: spouse, mother, caregiver, friend, and/or worker. With all you have going on in your life, it seems almost impossible to find ways to de-stress. But it's important to find those ways. Your health and the health of your developing baby depend on it.

What are some early signs of stress?

Stress can take on many different forms, and can contribute to symptoms of illness. Common symptoms include headache, sleep disorders, difficulty concentrating, short-temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction, low morale, depression, and anxiety.

How do women tend to react to stress?

We all deal with stressful things like traffic, arguments with spouses, and job problems. Some researchers think that women handle stress in a unique way: we tend and befriend.

- **Tend** : women protect and care for their children
- **Befriend** : women seek out and receive social support

During stress, women tend to care for their children and find support from their female friends. Women's bodies make chemicals that are believed to promote these responses. One of these chemicals is oxytocin (ahk-see-toe-sin), which has a calming effect during stress. This is the same chemical released during childbirth and found at higher levels in breastfeeding mothers, who are believed to be calmer and more social than women who don't breastfeed. Women also have the hormone estrogen, which boosts the effects of oxytocin.

How does stress affect my body and my health?

Everyone has stress such as short-term stress, like getting lost while driving or missing the bus. Even everyday events, such as planning a meal or making time for errands, can be stressful. This kind of stress can make you feel worried or anxious.

Other times, you face long-term stress, such as racial discrimination, a life-threatening illness, or divorce. These stressful events also affect your health on many levels. Long-term stress is real and can increase your risk for some health problems, like depression.

Both short and long-term stress can have effects on your body. Research is starting to show the serious effects of stress on our bodies. Stress triggers changes in your body and makes you more likely to get sick. It can also make problems you already have worse. It can play a part in these problems:

- trouble sleeping
- headaches
- constipation
- diarrhea
- irritability
- lack of energy
- lack of concentration
- eating too much or not at all
- anger
- sadness
- higher risk of asthma and arthritis flare-ups
- tension
- stomach cramping
- stomach bloating
- skin problems, like hives
- depression
- anxiety
- weight gain or loss
- heart problems
- high blood pressure
- irritable bowel syndrome
- diabetes
- neck and/or back pain
- less sexual desire
- harder to get pregnant

How can I help handle my stress?

Don't let stress make you sick. As women, we tend to carry a higher burden of stress than we should. Often we aren't even aware of our stress levels. Listen to your body, so that you know when stress is affecting your health. Here are ways to help you handle your stress.

- **Relax.** It's important to unwind. Each person has her own way to relax. Some ways include deep breathing, meditation, and massage therapy. If you can't do these things, take a few minutes to sit, listen to soothing music, or read a book.
- **Make time for yourself.** It's important to care for yourself. Think of this as an order from your doctor, so you don't feel guilty! No matter how busy you are, try to set aside at least 15 minutes each day in your schedule to do something for yourself, like taking a bubble bath, going for a walk, or calling a friend.
- **Sleep.** Sleeping is a great way to help both your body and mind. Your stress could get worse if you don't get enough sleep. You also can't fight off sickness as well when you sleep poorly. With enough sleep, you can tackle your problems better and lower your risk for illness. Try to get seven to nine hours of sleep every night.
- **Eat right.** Try to fuel up with fruits, vegetables, and proteins. Good sources of protein can be peanut butter, chicken, or tuna salad. Eat whole-grains, such as

wheat breads and wheat crackers. Don't be fooled by the jolt you get from caffeine or sugar. Your energy will wear off.

- **Get moving.** Believe it or not, getting physical activity not only helps relieve your tense muscles, but helps your mood too! Your body makes certain chemicals, called endorphins, before and after you work out. They relieve stress and improve your mood.
- **Talk to friends.** Talk to friends to help you work through your stress. Friends are good listeners. Finding someone who will let you talk freely about your problems and feelings without judging you does a world of good. It also helps to hear a different point of view. Friends will remind you that you're not alone.
- **Compromise.** Sometimes, it's not always worth the stress to argue. Give in once in awhile.
- **Write down your thoughts.** Keeping a journal can be a great way to get things off your chest and work through issues. Later, you can go back and read through your journal and see how you've made progress!
- **Help others.** Helping someone else can help you. Help your neighbor, or volunteer in your community.
- **Get a hobby.** Find something you enjoy. Make sure to give yourself time to explore your interests.
- **Set limits.** When it comes to things like work and family, figure out what you can really do. There are only so many hours in the day. Set limits with yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.
- **Plan your time.** Think ahead about how you're going to spend your time. Write a to-do list. Figure out what's most important to do.
- **Don't deal with stress in unhealthy ways.** This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking, or overeating.

I heard deep breathing could help my stress. How do I do it?

Deep breathing is a good way to relax. Try it a couple of times every day. Here's how to do it.

1. Lie down or sit in a chair.
2. Rest your hands on your stomach.
3. Slowly count to four and inhale through your nose. Feel your stomach rise. Hold it for a second.
4. Slowly count to four while you exhale through your mouth. To control how fast you exhale, purse your lips like you're going to whistle. Your stomach will slowly fall.
5. Repeat five to 10 times.

Does stress cause ulcers?

Doctors used to think that ulcers were caused by stress and spicy foods. Now, we know that stress doesn't cause ulcers—it just irritates them. Ulcers are actually caused by a bacterium (germ) called *H. pylori*. Researchers don't yet know for sure how people get it. They think people might get it through food or water. It's treated with a combination of antibiotics and other drugs.