

Is your family stressed out?

Research shows that adults and children feel stressed about similar things. Do you know the signs to recognize when your family is stressing to an unhealthy degree? Take a few minutes to place a checkmark next to statements with which you agree.

	Yes	No
1. Are you or your children having difficulty sleeping at night?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Do you have family arguments often?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Have you cut down on family dinners and get-togethers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Are family members withdrawing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Have you been struggling at work, or have your children had trouble at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Have your family members been sick often?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Have eating patterns changed – either overeating or undereating?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Do you feel that you are running around all the time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you had more “yes” than “no” responses, your family may be feeling stressed. Stress is complicated and tends to impact people over a long period of time. Here are a few tips to help you and your family manage your stress

1. If you find it difficult to sleep at night, put the children to bed a half hour earlier, then put yourself to bed a half hour earlier, too.
2. If you are arguing often, soften your voice to bring down the volume of the conversation. Also, suggest you and your children take a time out together—take a deep breath and start over.
3. If you don’t have family dinners often, or they’ve become unenjoyable, make a “praise bowl.” Each family member writes down something positive about another family member and places it in the “praise bowl” to be shared during dinner time.
4. If you’ve noticed members of your family are withdrawing, have an open conversation. Ask your children what’s bothering them.
5. If you’ve been struggling at work, or your children are having a difficult time at school, concentrate and stay organized. If you have a hard time being on time, consider preparing more the night before so the morning isn’t so rushed.
6. If your family is sick often, go back to the basics – go to bed earlier, wash your hands, exercise and eat healthy.
7. If your children are overeating, cut down on portion sizes. Before preparing food, ask your children if they’re hungry, and remind them to slow down the speed they eat and actually enjoy their food. If your children are undereating, eliminate distractions during meal time (i.e. TV, toys and games) and focus on making meal time relaxed and upbeat.
8. If you feel that your family is on the life treadmill and cannot take a break, stop for a minute and take a dozen deep breaths. Talk to your children and ask if they feel overwhelmed with too many sports, clubs, etc., and if they do, reevaluate what’s on their schedules and what can be cut out.

Help is available. For additional information, visit www.magellanhealth.com/mymh

Source: Parents.com