

A Breath of Fresh Air

A newsletter for Reliant Medical Group COPD patients and their families

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I am sure we can all agree that spring could not have come soon enough but here it finally is! After such a harsh and long winter, spring feels especially wonderful. The warm days with a gentle breeze are just perfect for going outside and taking a really deep breath, soaking it all in.

On communicating...

I have to share with you today a growing frustration with my failed attempts to get you to call Chris or myself when you start having problems. Many of you suffer needlessly before deciding to call and while waiting let your lungs deteriorate even further. I have tried many ways to get you to call us, but many of you still hesitate for some reason. Please remember to never say, "I did not want to bother you... I thought I would get better... I had an appointment with you already scheduled." **Please call us whenever you need us!**

In this issue our nurse practitioner Meg Paige addresses a very important topic that a lot of you can relate to. Stress seems to be a growing problem in modern life but for people who have difficulty breathing it is, of course, particularly important since it makes your breathing even worse.



Start management strategies – six ways to manage your stress:

#1 Avoid unnecessary stress:

- Learn to say “no” – know your limits and stick to them. Taking on more than you can handle is a recipe for stress.
- Avoid people who stress you out, limit the amount of time you spend with this person or end the relationship entirely.
- Take control of your environment – if the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off.
- Avoid hot-button topics – if you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list.



#2 Alter the situation:

- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up
- Be willing to compromise
- Be more assertive, deal with problems head on
- Manage your time better

#3 Adapt to the stressor:

- Reframe problems – try to view stressful situations from a positive perspective
- Look at the big picture
- Adjust your standards
- Focus on the positive

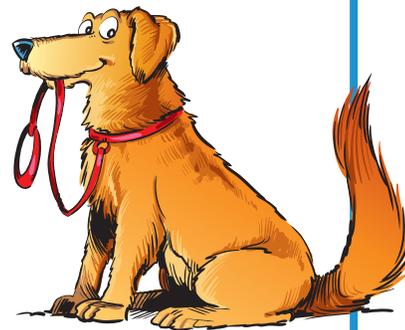
#4 Accept things you can not change:

- Don't control the uncontrollable
- Share your feelings
- Learn to forgive

#5 Make time for fun and relaxation:

You can reduce your stress in your life by nurturing yourself. Here are some healthy ways to relax and recharge:

- Go for a walk
- Play with a pet
- Call a good friend
- Write in your journal
- Take a long bath
- Spend time with nature
- Work in your garden
- Get a massage
- Listen to music
- Watch a comedy



Don't forget to take care of your needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity!

#6 Adopt a healthy lifestyle:

- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Reduce caffeine and sugar
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs
- Get enough sleep

Besides recognizing what makes you stressed, recognize if you need more help. Talk to a psychologist, social worker or a professional counselor.



**Be happy,
don't worry...**