

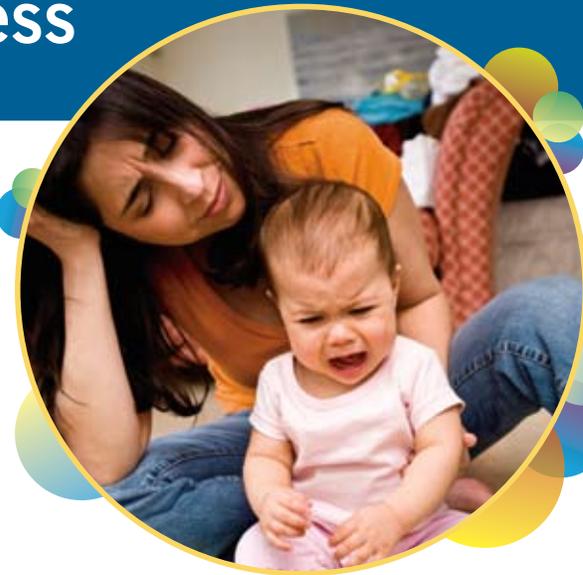
TIP SHEET: Coping with Stress

For the parent

Being a parent is very stressful at every age of your child's life. It is normal to feel stressed when dealing with the tasks of being a parent, from difficult mealtimes and temper tantrums, to disobedient children.

Here are a few tips to calm yourself down and deal with your own stress:

- Take care of yourself. Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water and get fresh air. Sleep when the baby sleeps. If possible, work out a nighttime schedule with other adults in the house that allows everyone to rest and care for the baby.
- Do something you enjoy every day, either with your baby or on your own. Good habits will help you maintain the energy you need to care for your newborn.
- It's normal; all parents get frustrated. Children take a lot of time and energy. Parenting is even harder when you have problems in your own life, such as worries about your job, your bills or your relationships, or problems with alcohol or drugs. To be a good parent, you have to first take care of yourself. That means getting help for your problems.
- When your child is being difficult, sometimes it is best to take a deep breath, center your thoughts and then react to your child. Do not allow yourself to get upset; your child is trying to get you to react this way.
- When you get frustrated, take a break. Everyone needs a break from being a parent once in a while. If you have another adult in your family, take turns getting away. For example, have your partner stay with the children so you can visit friends. Take turns sleeping late on the weekends.
- Many parents lose their temper with their children. It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to take it



out on your children. When you're really angry, take a break. For example, take your children for a walk or call a friend to come help you. If you feel angry with your child almost every day or have trouble controlling your temper, get some help by talking to your family doctor. He can offer advice and provide references to help you.

- Show your love. For example, you could tell your children: "I love you. You're special to me." Give lots of hugs and kisses.
- Praise your children. When your children learn something new or behave well, tell them you're proud of them.
- Spend time with your children. Do things together, such as reading, walking, playing and cleaning the house. What children want most is your attention. Bad behavior is usually an attempt to get your attention.
- Provide order in your child's life. Keep a regular schedule of meals, naps and bedtimes. If you have to change the schedule, tell your child about the changes ahead of time.