

THE BARIX™ SUPPORT GROUP GUIDE

For Education and Support of all Barix Clinics Patients



VISUALIZATION

Stress Reduction Methods to Restore your Body's Physical and Emotional Balance

The stress response is designed to protect us. However, our fast paced lives are filled with pressure and stress very different than the type of stress our ancestors experienced. The chronic (long term) stress often experienced today can lead to physical, emotional or relational symptoms. Scientists are finding an increasing amount of evidence indicating that stress causes or exacerbates many diseases including obesity.

Psychologytoday.com reports that new studies document how stress experienced in the past magnifies the reactivity to stress in the future. "The effects of stress are even more profound than imagined. It penetrates to the core of your being. Stress is not something that grips us and, with time or effort, then lets go. It changes us in the process. It alters our bodies—and our brains." The article summarizes research that demonstrates the ways that stress can cause illness, depression and a hyperactive stress response. Clearly, it is important to get a handle on the stress in our lives before it eats away at our health.

Chronic stress can wear you down, cause illness, rob you of joy, and interfere with healthy relationships. Learning stress reduction methods

can be helpful at restoring the body's homeostasis and providing a sense of inner peace. Some common methods of stress reduction include exercise, adequate or improved sleep, meditation, deep breathing, laughter, yoga or other slow moving exercises, and visualization. Visualization is the focus of this month's *Support Group Guide*.

Visualization or imagery is an effective method of stress reduction, especially when combined with physical relaxation methods such as the deep breathing relaxation response developed by Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard University. The idea behind visualization is to use your imagination to create a situation that is very enjoyable and relaxing.

THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
4. Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, "ONE," silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN...OUT, "ONE"; IN...OUT, "ONE"; etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
5. Continue for 10–20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your

eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.

6. Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, ignore them by not dwelling upon them and return to repeating "ONE." With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours after any meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the relaxation response.

The Relaxation Response, Benson, H., William Morrow and Company, Inc. New York, 1975

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A common use of relaxation visualization is to imagine a scene that is safe, peaceful, relaxing, restful, beautiful and happy. You can bring all of your senses into the image with imagined sounds, smells, tastes, and pleasant temperatures. You can create your own imaginary retreat or use a prepared tape to guide you through the experience. Guided relaxation and visualization audio segments are available at no cost from www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/RelaxationTape/.

Another method of utilizing visualization in relaxation is to create a mental picture with a deep breathing exercise. You may envision that as you take in a deep breath, warmth, comfort, peace, and happiness fill your body and that as you breathe out, stress, anger, pain, and negativity flow out.

Visualizing an important or stressful situation in advance allows you to mentally practice the situation, decreasing anxiety, and prepare for variable situations that may occur. Athletes often use visualization to improve performance by mentally practicing a wide range of potential situations. Habitual responses to these situations are developed so that the response is almost automatic.

Once you learn to relax your body by these methods, a few deep breaths can bring you into a relaxed state at anytime you desire.

Some of the secret JOYS of living are not found by RUSHING from point A to point B, but by inventing some imaginary letters along the way.

~Douglas Pagels

These Are the Gifts I'd Like to Give to You



REFER a FRIEND! CALL JULIE at 800-282-0066, ext. 1425, or REQUEST a FREE INFORMATION GUIDE for a FRIEND—www.barixinfo.com/sgg

TIPS FOR REDUCING STRESS

- Plan ahead and get organized. Disorganization can breed stress.
- Try to understand the situation. This will decrease the fear of the unknown and possibly provide you with some options to control, change or adjust to the situation.
- Set and accept limits. Set achievable goals for yourself so you feel confident in your ability and a sense of success when the goals are met. Say “no” to activities and responsibilities that you do not have time for.
- Find regular escapes from the pressures of life with a hobby or activity that you enjoy.
- Identify exactly what is causing you stress and then try to list one or more possible solutions.
- Check your attitude—is it positive? If not, replace those negative thoughts with powerful, positive thinking. How we feel emotionally often depends upon our outlook on life.
- Get regular exercise. Find something that you enjoy doing. Exercise has an unbeatable ability to release the tension of stress from our bodies.
- Don't shortchange yourself on sleep. Stress hormones can rise when you become sleep deprived.
- Avoid caffeine, sugar and junk food.
- Learn a relaxation method and take regular relaxation breaks throughout the day.
- Talk. Expressing your bottled up tension or fears to a friend, therapist, or family member can be incredibly helpful.
- Assess your reaction to stressful situations. Stress isn't an event or situation; it comes from your reaction to that event or situation.

IT WORKED FOR ME!

When it comes to New Year resolutions, I like to make "New Day" resolutions. Being able to reach my daily goal inspires me to either keep working on the one I'm successful at—or set a new one. That way, if for whatever reason I didn't hit my goal the previous day, I don't get down on myself. I just look at what got in my way and try to work through that obstacle and start over!

—Submitted by Emily A.



WHAT'S New

Hershey's Sugar Free Chunks are now available in place of chocolate chips for your baking needs. These are not a low calorie food and are sweetened with sugar alcohols—enjoy in moderation.

OTHERS CARE. PLEASE SHARE.

Please tell us about the lives that have changed because you shared your weight-loss story. Submit your story on the “Share Your Success” section of the Patient website. What you have to say may be printed in this publication or on our website and can serve as inspiration to all.

REWARD Yourself!

This month, you could earn a **\$25 GIFT CERTIFICATE** for your "It Worked for Me" tips or recipes! Just submit as many recipes and "It worked for me" tips as you like, the most original and creative will be awarded a \$25.00 gift certificate. Include your name and contact info with your entry—make sure your recipes follow Barix nutritional guidelines. Tips must be submitted by January 31, 2006. This month, thanks to Louise B., and Wendy H. for the tips and recipes. Please send comments, ideas, recipes, and "It Worked For Me" tips to Deb Hart, RD, LD at dhart@foresthealth.com.

RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY



To receive a free **RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY GUIDE**, CALL 800-282-0066 or send us an email at rc@barixclinics.com with your name and contact information.

Our reconstructive surgery program is currently performed at all our centers in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Arizona.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCING YOUR SURGERY?

Call a **Barix Patient Service Representative** at 800-282-0066.

Tortilla Dessert Cups

Submitted by Louise B.

½ cup Splenda®
1 ½ Tbsp. cinnamon
10 flour tortillas, 6 inch in diameter
8 oz cream cheese, fat free
1 cup milk, skim

3-1 oz package no added sugar white chocolate, chocolate or vanilla instant pudding mix
8 oz Cool Whip Free®
1 cup raspberries, fresh or frozen without added sugar

In a small bowl, combine cinnamon and Splenda. Spray one side of the tortilla with butter flavored cooking spray and then sprinkle with cinnamon mixture. Repeat on the other side. Cut each tortilla into 4-quarter wedges. Take each wedge, cutting it as needed to form into mini muffin pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until crisp and lightly brown. Cool completely.

Mix milk and pudding mix with hand-mixer for 2 minutes until thickened. Add cream cheese and beat on low speed until well blended. Fold in Cool Whip Free. Cover and refrigerate for 5 minutes. Spoon about a tablespoon of filling into each cup. Top each dessert with a few raspberries. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 40 servings.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING: 24 calories; 1 gram protein; 0 grams fat; 4 grams carbohydrate; 68 mg sodium; 29 mg calcium.

French Toast



4 slices light bread
½ cup egg substitute

¼ cup milk, skim
1 scoop Any Whey Protein

Lay bread on counter for 20 minutes or longer. Stir Any Whey Protein into skim milk using a fork to mix evenly. Mix egg sub and protein mixture together with a wire whisk. Spray non-stick skillet with pan spray. Heat skillet to medium high. Dip bread in egg mixture and place in skillet. Cook until browned and then flip and cook the other side. Serve with sugar free syrup, peanut butter or fresh berries. Makes 4 servings.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING: 39 calories; 7 grams protein; 0 grams fat; 4 grams carbohydrate; 61 mg sodium; 53 mg calcium

HEALTHFUL Tidbits

UCLA researcher David Creswell has found that it may be helpful to reflect on what is most important to you in life before entering a stressful situation to calm your production of cortisol, one of the stress hormones. Basically, figure out what aspects of yourself or your life you hold most dear and then reflect on those things when stress comes calling.

Those thoughts or affirmations may be a shield against stress.

Creswell's experiment involved listing values that are most prized in life. These values could be your faith, your skills as a father, your relationship with your spouse, or any other values that are important in your life. The participants in his study that reflected on the most important values prior to being placed in a stressful situation, produced lower levels of cortisol.

SOURCES: Creswell, Psychological Science, November 2005, vol 16: pp 846-852. David Creswell, psychology doctoral student, UCLA. News release, UCLA.