

# STRESS FACT SHEET

## **What is stress?**

- Stress is an emotional/bodily reaction to physical, psychological or emotional demands.
- Stress is a fact of life.
  - Managed stress can become useful and healthy (viewing events as challenges).
  - Unmanaged stress can become distressful and unhealthy (viewing events as threats).

## **What are some of the causes of stress?**

- Expectations we place on ourselves
- Expectations of others
- Our physical environment -- noise, movement, weather, season changes
- Our internal environment -- academic pressure, frustration, not enough time, decisions, social life

## **What are some symptoms of unmanaged stress?**

- Increased heart rate and blood pressure; feeling tense, irritable, fatigued, or depressed
- Lack of interest and ability to concentrate, apathy
- Avoidance behaviors: abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco

## **What are ways to manage stress effectively?**

- Add balance to life; don't overdo studies or play.
- Know and accept what kind of person you are: strengths and weaknesses.
- Get a thorough physical exam.
- Take "time outs", especially during study.
- Expand your support network, reinforce friendships.
- Exercise regularly.
- Watch your breathing.
- Walk loosely and walk more.
- Learn and practice relaxation skills.
- Study each subject regularly for moderate periods of time.
- Discuss problems with friends, family, dean or counselor.