California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

Tip of the Month
~ # 17~

Requirements for Stress Reduction Activities

Although there are many ways to reduce stress, not all of them have qualities that make them appealing. And if they are not appealing, they will be difficult to maintain.

Dr. Stephanie Smith writes a blog about lowering stress. She confesses that she hates yoga and admires popular stress-lowering strategies, such as meditating, journaling, praying and exercising (especially walking, which we all in Sweet Success encourage our moms to do). Dr. Smith says that stress management activities need to have certain "requirements" in order to be effective and do-able. Her requirements are that the activity be:

1. Something you actually like
2. Easy and cheap
3. Something that makes you feel relaxed afterwards
4. Something that helps you to forget your worries for a while.

Her ideas of things that fit in these categories are: reading a book or a magazine, gardening, watching T.V., baking, and having tea with a friend.

A person may like doing many things, but may not have the time or the money to do them. And it is only useful to suggest what WE like to do as a way of encouraging a patient to think of her own ideas of what she likes to do and what makes her feel less stressed.

Ask your patient what appeals to her, and then use the other three "requirements" as questions to help clarify what might work. Many moms come up with ideas, but may reject them for various valid reasons. These four "requirements" can help focus someone's list to include things that they actually would be able to manage and to enjoy.

Thank you for all you do for your Sweet Success moms.

("Requirements" from www.yourmindyourbody.com/moving-beyond-yoga-)