

Stress Reduction through Yoga:

A program for adolescent girls taught in a pediatric primary care setting

Background:

“Stress” has many causes and forms of expression in the lives of most teenagers. There are physical, emotional, and social stressors, and each can have adverse effects on an adolescent’s physical health, psychological well being, sleep patterns, eating habits, and social interactions. For adolescents with chronic illnesses such as migraine headaches, functional abdominal pain, painful menstrual cramps, and chronic fatigue syndrome the interaction between the psychological states of anxiety and depression and somatic symptoms contributes to morbidity, school absenteeism, and compromised quality of life. Research by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues at UMass Medical Center has demonstrated that instruction and practice of yoga and simple meditation techniques for stress reduction have reduced morbidity and enhanced quality of life among adults with a variety of chronic illnesses.

The program at Lexington Pediatrics teaches yoga and introduces the concept of “mindfulness” to adolescent girls. The instructor, Sally McAlpin has been certified to teach these mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques, combining breath work with a meditative flow of postures, safely taught to create structural alignment in the body. Sally’s classes allow the student to release held tensions while gaining strength and flexibility. This mindful practice encourages students to remain present in the body, relaxing their minds, while cultivating a deep sense of well-being and awareness. .

The course at Lexington Pediatrics:

The course consists of 6 consecutive weekly group classes taught in the first floor waiting room at Lexington Pediatrics on Thursday evenings from 6:00-7:15pm. Class size is limited to 8 participants per session, and is open to teenage girls between the ages of 12 and 18. First priority will be given to girls who are patients at Lexington Pediatrics but the course is open to all girls in Lexington and neighboring communities who are interested in participating. The program is recommended for patients with stress related illnesses including but not limited to migraine headaches, functional abdominal pain and dysmenorrhea, chronic fatigue syndrome, sleep and eating disorders, anxiety and depression.

The cost of the entire course is \$75 (sliding scale available); yoga mats, blankets, and support blocks are provided. We would like to measure the impact of the course by administering pre and post course questionnaires to the participants, which will be optional and anonymous.

Generally the 6 week course will be offered 4 times a year.

The course is offered when sufficient interest warrants and the schedule of the instructor allows.

Check our website www.lexpeds.com regularly to learn when the next course begins.

Please complete the **attached registration form** and return it to our office with a check for \$75.