



Coronavirus Update

March 24, 2020

Coping during uncertain times

Tip sheet on work, health and life

Times of uncertainty often cause stress for many – it's to be expected. As everyone adjusts to a "new normal" during the coronavirus pandemic, it's important to take care of ourselves so we can support our loved ones and be able to work. Start with recognizing that it makes sense to feel anxious in these circumstances. There's nothing irrational about these feelings and accepting that fact is the first step towards handling them.

In fact, there's a lot you can do to take control of your stress.

1. Do what you can to take charge of your anxiety by breaking your concerns down into manageable chunks.
2. Change what you can, and work on strategies for accepting and coping with what you can't.
3. Limit your media exposure so you're not dwelling on the situation.
4. Stay connected, through whatever means are available, to the people that are important to you.
5. Above all, remember what stress management strategies work for you, and actually use them regularly to get through this challenging outbreak.

Staying mentally healthy

The emotional effects of the coronavirus are as important to focus on as are the physical effects. Practicing physical distancing does not mean we can't be socially connected. Here are ideas to help.

Create and maintain a daily routine

- Daily routines provide reassurance and control.
- Get up during your normal time and get dressed.
- Plan a daily schedule with your family.
- Make sure movement is included!

Connect with others

- Use phone calls, texts and video chats to stay connected to your support system. Talk about your concerns.
- Support family members by listening and talking.
- Get creative- loop in family and friends via webcam during dinner, FaceTime happy hour or usual social gatherings to replace face-to-face connections.

Give back to others

- Check on older neighbors and other vulnerable adults. Being the bright spot in someone else's day often brings a little joy to your own.
- Help elderly with needed items via doorstep drop-off.
- Offer virtual tutoring if you have the time and the skillset.
- Initiate a virtual support group.

Keep a gratitude journal

- Not usually your thing? Give it a try! Write down three things you are grateful for each morning and/or evening.

Pay attention to changes in feelings

- Pay attention to issues you or loved ones might be having with sleep, restlessness or tension. Identify what is causing it and create a plan.
- Examine your worries and try to be realistic about the concern as well as your ability to cope.
- Learn to meditate. Five minutes of meditation throughout the day helps to calm and re-focus.
- Learn to [manage stress and anxiety](#).

Worry about finances

- Seek family help if possible.
- Join your neighborhood Facebook page to learn about free resources.
- Explore support from local religious communities.
- Learn what resources you may be eligible for through new legislation.

Manage news consumption

- Try to set time limits on your cell phone or make a household rule for when the TV is on.
- Take breaks from social media.
- Limit news to credible sources- it's important to get accurate and timely information but too much exposure causes stress. [Coronavirus.gov](#) is a trusted source for information.

Free resources to help with stress

- Mindfulness toolkit: <http://www.mindfulness.tools/>.
- Resiliency toolkit: <https://www.resiliency.tools/>.
- Meditation toolkit: <https://www.meditate.tools/>.
- Meditation apps: www.calm.com/ and <https://insighttimer.com/>.
- Practical ways of coping: [Ten Percent Happier](#).

Free well-being courses

- Academic courses on variety to well-being topics: [The Science of Well-being: Yale](#).

Staying physically healthy

Focus on ways to keep your physical health strong. Eat a healthy diet, exercise and get enough rest to feel refreshed each day.

Exercise

Your gym or fitness studio may be closed, but there are a variety of services that can bring fitness into your home.

Connect with nature

- Physical isolation doesn't mean hibernating in your house! Find opportunities to get outside.
- Find time in your day to take a walk or work outside. Do it with your kiddos or furry friends.
- There are health benefits of Vitamin D from exposure to the sun.

Find new ways to workout

- Find free online exercise classes. Ask family or friends to participate from within their homes.
- Do yoga with household members- kids will have fun!
- Sit on an exercise ball at your home desk (make sure to use good posture).
- Get some resistance bands and follow the instructions.
- If allowed in your area, hit the road for a walk or run.
- Bring chalk with you and jot down funny or uplifting messages on the sidewalks to your neighbors to help stay connected.

Free workout resources

- Create your own circuit training routine: [American Heart Association](#).
- Cardio, strength and stretch videos: [Fitness Blender](#).
- Workout videos, challenges and plans: [Blogilates](#).
- Explore available resources on TV and streaming connections.

Nourishing your body

In times of stress making unhealthy choices can often make you feel worse.

Plan your meals

- Planning meals avoids extra trips to the store and can save you money, avoiding food waste.
- Use the extra time you might have to plan meals since you are not traveling to work.
- Include family in planning and meal preparation.
- Avoid over-buying supplies; stores report stocking up enough for one week for all customers and over-buying may impact neighbors' supplies.

Color your plate

- The best way to get all the vitamins and nutrients your body needs is to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables.
- Add the five main color groups to your [daily plate](#).

Drink lots of water

- Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water (64 ounces). Tap water is fine.
- A slice of lemon, lime or fruit can add flavor.

Limit alcohol

- Stress can lead to drinking more alcohol. Alcohol increases stress by producing hormones that the body normally makes when you are under stress.
- If you are concerned about alcohol consumptions, be sure to talk to your doctor.

Tips for eating

- [Tips for eating - Harvard](#).
- Examples include:
 - Eat slowly putting your fork down between bites.
 - Take a drink of water or a deep breath between bites.
 - Sit at the table.
 - Remove distractions like television or social media.

Working remotely

Create a dedicated workspace

- Organize your space, keep it tidy and set up where there is natural light.
- Use good posture and review ergonomic guidance.

Manage your schedule

- Clearly define work hours and plan a schedule that allows for family breaks.
- Set an alarm to get up every 30 minutes to stretch and move.
- Explore ways to keep yourself active while on work calls (stand up) or walk a lap around the block where allowed.
- Continue to practice tips to support your personal and mental health throughout the day.

Protect yourself

- [Protect yourself - CDC](#).
- Contact your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of daily activities.
- Be sure prescribed medicines are updated and filled.
- Make a list of doctors, pharmacy, family and emergency contacts.

Know your benefits and resources

- **Health plan**- learn about new expanded and free services; visit your health plan website.
- **Telemedicine**- ask your doctors if they are offering virtual care so you don't have to go in the office. If you have a telemedicine service through your benefits plan, now is the time to learn about it and set it up - be ready for when you need it.
- **Employee assistance plan (EAP)**- if you have an EAP, they may offer resources and support with family issues, back-up childcare, finances, emotional support and more.
- **Financial planning /retirement accounts**– many financial institutions that manage retirement accounts provide debt relief planning, budget assistance and emergency loans.

Not medical advice: This document is not medical advice. Individuals should contact their healthcare provider for advice.