Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Cope

Manage Anxiety & Stress

Need Help? Know Someone Who Does?
Contact the: Disaster Distress Helpline
https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline or Call 1-800-985-5990

Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline

https://www.thehotline.org/ or Call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

Stress and Coping

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include
• Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
• Children and teens
• People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
• People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use

If you, or someone you care about, is feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call

• 911
• Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include

• Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
• Changes in sleep or eating patterns
• Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
• Worsening of chronic health problems
• Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website.

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

Things you can do to support yourself

• Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
• Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
• Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
• Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.
Reduce stress in yourself and others

**Sharing the facts** about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and allow you to connect with them.

Learn more about **taking care of your emotional health**.

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**SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19**

**FACT 1**
Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

**FACT 2**
For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19.

**FACT 3**
Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC’s coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) web page.

**FACT 4**
There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

**FACT 5**
You can help stop COVID-19 by recognizing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath.

Seek medical advice if you:
- Develop symptoms AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

[cdc.gov/COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19)
For parents

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

There are many things you can do to support your child

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

Learn more about helping children cope.
For responders

Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional toll on you. There are things you can do to reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions:

- Acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event.
- Learn the symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt).
- Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic.
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy, such as spending time with friends and family, exercising, or reading a book.
- Take a break from media coverage of COVID-19.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.

Learn more tips for taking care of yourself during emergency response.

For people who have been released from quarantine

Being separated from others if a healthcare provider thinks you may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be stressful, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine. Some feelings include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine
- Other emotional or mental health changes

Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from quarantine. You can help your child cope.
Resources For Everyone

- Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event

For Communities

- Coping with stress during an infectious disease outbreak
- Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health during an Infectious Disease Outbreak

For Families and Children

- Helping Children Cope with Emergencies
  - Coping After a Disasterpdf icon – A Ready Wrigley activity book for children age 3-10

For First Responders

- Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself
- Disaster Technical Assistance Centerexternal icon (SAMHSA)

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- How to Prepare plus icon
  - How It Spreads
  - Protect Yourself
  - Protect Your Family plus icon
    - Pregnancy & Breastfeeding
    - Animals
    - Children
  - Protect Your Home plus icon
    - Get Your Home Ready
    - Clean & Disinfect
    - Checklist to Get Ready
  - Manage Anxiety & Stress

- Symptoms & Testing plus icon
  - Symptoms
  - Testing
  - Reducing Stigma plus icon
    - Key Facts

- Are You at Higher Risk for Severe Illness? plus icon
  - People Who are at Higher Risk
  - Older Adults
- People with Asthma and COVID-19
- People with HIV
- Steps to Prevent Getting Sick

**If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone**
- What to Do If You Are Sick
- Caring for Someone
- Caring for Yourself at Home

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Travel**
- Travelers Returning from High Risk Countries
- Returning Cruise Ship Travelers
- Travel in the United States
- Travel Health Notices
- Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the United States
- Communication Resources
- FAQ for Travelers

**Cases & Latest Updates**
- Cases in U.S.
- Testing in U.S.
- World Map
- Situation Summary
- CDC in Action

**Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations**
- 15-day Pause
- Resources for Home
- **Schools & Childcare**
  - Guidance for School & Childcare
  - FAQs for Administrators
  - Checklist for Teachers and Parents
  - Talking With Children About Coronavirus Disease 2019
- **Colleges & Universities**
  - Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education
  - Guidance for Student Foreign Travel for Institutions of Higher Education
  - FAQs for Administrators
- **Work**
  - Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- **Community- and Faith-Based Organizations**
  - Interim Guidance for Community and Faith Leaders
  - Checklist to Get Your Organization Ready
  - Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations
- **Community Events**
  - Interim Guidance for Event Planners
  - Election Polling Locations
  - FAQs for Event
- **Homeless Population**
  - Interim guidance for homeless service providers
  - People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Interim Guidance
- **First Responders and Law Enforcement**
- **Information for Law Enforcement Personnel**
  - Public Health Communicators
  - Retirement Communities
  - Correctional and Detention Facilities

- **Healthcare Professionals**
  - Evaluating and Testing PUI
  - Postmortem Guidance
  - Interim Guidance for EMS
  - Infection Control
    - Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations
    - FAQ on Infection Control
    - HCP Hand Sanitizer
    - FAQ on Hand Hygiene
  - Clinical Care
    - Therapeutic Options for Patients with COVID-19
    - Pediatric Healthcare Providers
    - Disposition of Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19
    - Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Guidance
    - Underlying Conditions
  - What Healthcare Personnel Should Know
  - Strategies to Optimize PPE & Equipment
    - Eye Protection
    - Isolation Gowns
    - Facemasks
    - N95 Respirators
    - PPE Burn Rate Calculator
  - Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19
  - Preparedness Resources
    - Healthcare Providers Preparedness Checklist
  - Implementing Home Care
    - Preventing COVID-19 from spreading
    - Disposition of Non-Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19
  - Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment
    - FAQ About Personal Protective Equipment
    - Release of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators
  - FAQ for Healthcare Professionals

- **Healthcare Facilities**
  - Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take
  - Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities
  - Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes
  - Dialysis Facilities
  - Return-to-Work Criteria for Healthcare Workers
  - Prepare to Care for COVID-19

- **Health Departments**
  - Evaluating PUIs Residential
  - Reporting a PUI or Confirmed Case
  - Risk Assessment and Management
  - Pandemic Preparedness Resources
Households with Pets
COVID-19 Publications
Water Transmission and COVID-19

- **Laboratories**
  - FAQs for Laboratories
  - CDC Lab Work
    - Testing
    - CDC Grows SARS-CoV-2
  - Guidelines for Clinical Specimens
  - Lab Biosafety Guidelines
  - Requests for Diagnostic Tools and Virus
  - Research Use Only Real-Time RT-PCR Primer and Probe Information

- **Communication Resources**
  - Buttons and Badges
  - Print Resources
  - Videos
  - What’s New

**HAVE QUESTIONS?**
Visit CDC-INFO
Call 800-232-4636  Open 24/7

The following is the hyperlink to this CDC webpage: