

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Mental health tips during a quarantine

People react differently to stressful situations, and the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19, may cause feelings ranging from concern or worry to anxiety or anger, among many other possible reactions.

If you and your household are under quarantine — whether self-quarantine or otherwise — you may be feeling a number of emotions including feeling anxious, lonely, bored or frustrated. It's important to understand your feelings during this time and pay attention to your mental health.

Here are some tips for helping take care of your mental health during this time.

1. **Look for ways to relax.** Find things that help you manage stress. Consider trying deep breathing, stretching or meditation. There are also apps that may help you deal with stress.
2. **Set boundaries.** While it's important to have up-to-date, reliable information, you should limit exposure to the ever-present media coverage.
3. **Create regular routines.** For example, consider setting up a regular routine for physical activity, communicating and connecting with others and continuing other day-to-day habits.
4. **Make a list.** Gather a list of contacts, including friends, family, neighbors, health care providers, as well as any therapists or counselors, and other community resources. Place it somewhere prominent in your home, for example, on your refrigerator.
5. **Check your medications.** Make sure you have any prescription and/or over-the-counter medications you need. Take your prescriptions as recommended. If possible, the recommendation is to have a two-week supply on hand. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist to learn how you can obtain what you need.
6. **Define how you'll stay connected.** Establish how you'll communicate with friends and family through available methods — text, phone calls, over the internet or even through letters in the mail. Consider “face-to-face” time using apps that allow you to videochat with others.
7. **Keep up with healthy habits.** Your physical health is an important part of your mental health, during a quarantine and always. Avoid using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to try to manage stress. Get plenty of rest and physical activity.

8. **Be aware of stress.** A quarantine may cause additional stress. For example, you may experience financial stress if you are unable to work. Talk with your employer about why you may be missing work. If need be, contact the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-866-487-2365 about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA offers employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for dealing with a serious medical condition for yourself or to care for a loved one.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Get your home ready. Accessed: 3/18/20.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Checklist to get ready. Accessed: 3/18/20.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklist-household-ready.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fchecklist-household-ready.html

National Institute of Health: How to Prepare. Accessed: 3/18/20.
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration: Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health. Accessed: 3/17/20. <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

World Health Organization: Tip Sheet "Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak." Accessed: 3/18/20. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_8

This service should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. The information and therapeutic approaches in this article are provided for informational and/or educational purposes only. They are not meant to be used in place of professional clinical consultations for individual health needs. Certain treatments may not be covered in some benefit plans.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates. Do not reproduce, transmit or modify the content set forth herein in any form or by any means without written permission of UnitedHealthcare.