

Managing Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a level of stress that many people have never experienced until now. The uncertainty of how the virus is spreading and how to protect ourselves is causing many to live in fear. It's important to take concrete steps to protect our mental and physical health and well-being. Consider these steps.



1. **Stay informed and take practical steps to protect yourself and loved ones.** Get the facts from trusted sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and your local health department. Do not stay glued to the news as this will only worsen the distress you may be feeling right now.
2. **Engage in healthy activities.** Get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Do not smoke. Drink no more than one alcoholic drink per day or none at all, per your doctor's instructions. Finally, exercise your body and mind. Meditation, walking, gardening and doing exercise routines in your home are all beneficial to your mental health.
3. **Make sure you have at least a one-month supply of the prescription and over-the-counter medications** you need to manage your mental health and other on-going medical conditions. Take all your medications as directed by your health care providers. Go to [BenefitsCheckUp.org](https://www.benefitscheckup.org) if you need assistance paying for your prescription medications.
4. **Stick to regular routines as much as possible.** You may need to create a new routine to account for exercising indoors, caring for grandchildren, cleaning or other daily activities. Integrate both old and new enjoyable hobbies into your daily routine.
5. **Stay connected with your family, friends, and other support networks (faith, hobbies, etc.).** Having someone to talk to about your needs and feelings is vital for mental health. Make a commitment to contact at least one person per day for continued social connection through telephone, e-mail, video conference and social media, if you have internet access.
6. **Try as much as possible to be positive and relish the simple things in life.** So many people across the country are helping their neighbors and communities during this crisis. After this pandemic is over, it is hopeful that we will be stronger, kinder and more connected with each other.
7. **Help others through peer support and neighbor checking.** Helping others gives us a sense of purpose and feeling of control during these uncertain times.

To learn more, visit <https://www.ncoa.org/blog/7-tips-for-managing-your-mental-health-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.