

DEALING WITH ANXIETY ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS 101

FOR YOU & YOUR FAMILY

You are not alone if you are having anxiety or stress about coronavirus. This is a normal reaction to the situation and many others are feeling the same things that you are.

Common stress reactions 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



Things you can do to support yourself:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media because hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
 - Get news updates from reputable sources like World Health Organization or Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - Control and Prevention.
 - Set time limits on how long you will look at news or social media.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Try to eat regular, healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep and maintain a regular bed time and wake up schedule.
 - Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind.
 - Schedule time to do activities that you know make you happy or help you feel more relaxed.
 - Try a new activity that you think that you might enjoy.
- Connect with others.
 - Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling, either by phone, text, or video conference.

Children and teens can also become stressed because of disruption in their routine and what they see in adults around them. Not all children or teens respond the same way.

Common behavior changes in children:

- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain

Specific behavior changes in younger children:

- Excessive crying or irritation
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)

Specific behavior changes in teens:

- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children.

Ways to support children:

- 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 in a healthy way 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.



For more information about managing anxiety and stress, visit the CDC’s Coronavirus Managing Anxiety & Stress webpage:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>