

Coping with Stress during a Pandemic

Know the signs of stress:

YOUR BEHAVIOR:

- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, sugar or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

YOUR BODY:

- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

YOUR EMOTIONS:

- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

YOUR THINKING:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions

Know How to Relieve Stress

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:

Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak. You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where many people have gotten sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.

GET THE FACTS:

Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information. Learn from them about the outbreak and how you can protect yourself against illness, if you are at risk. You may turn to your family doctor, a state or local health department, U.S. government agencies, or an international organization. *

KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY:

Eat healthy foods, and drink water.
Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol, and sugar.
Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
Get enough sleep and rest.
Get physical exercise.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY, FEELINGS, AND SPIRIT:

Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of thinking and feeling about this event, and think of how you handled your thoughts, emotions, and behavior around past events.
Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty, or angry is common after an event like an infectious disease outbreak, even when it does not directly threaten you.
Connect with others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak. Talk about your feelings about the outbreak, share reliable health information, and enjoy conversation unrelated to the outbreak, to remind yourself of the many important and positive things in your lives.
Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need.

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***For reliable information about COVID-19:**

[Oregon response:](#)

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Pages/emerging-respiratory-infections.aspx>

<https://oregon-coronavirus-geo.hub.arcgis.com/>

[United States response:](#) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention leads the U.S. response.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

[Global response:](#) The World Health Organization guides the global response

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>