

Coping with COVID-19

Facing a pandemic such as COVID-19 can be stressful and scary. There are continuous news reports of outbreaks and other developments. How can you remain calm?

- ❖ **Manage your media exposure.** Staying current on important changes (e.g., travel bans) is appropriate, but it's not necessary to check news outlets multiple times a day.
- ❖ **Stay connected with friends and loved ones.** Try to discuss various topics, not just the current crisis. Schedule regular video chats or phone calls.
- ❖ **Maintain routines when possible.** If your old routines (e.g., leaving for work) aren't possible, establish new ones such as daily walks or exercise.
- ❖ **Seek out meaningful, productive activities.** Make something creative, clean out an overstuffed closet or take an interesting course online.



Many of these strategies apply to helping children cope, too. Additional steps to support them include:

Correcting any misinformation. Encourage precautionary measures, but provide appropriate positive information as well. They should know, for example, that even if family members get sick, most likely they will recover.

Allowing them to express their feelings. Show that you understand what they feel by mirroring their communication ("sounds like you're pretty worried") without disputing it. Let them know that being frightened is perfectly normal.

Providing verbal and physical comfort. Reassure them, but avoid false promises.

Instructing them on ways to stay healthy. These steps include good hygiene (especially handwashing), nutrition, rest and exercise.

Remaining patient. They look to you as an example for how to cope. Know that the situation, while challenging for everyone, is temporary.