



Keep connecting for your health

Even though the coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing us to keep safe distances from others—we can still stay connected. Here are helpful tips, resources and information to keep your healthy routines going.

Keeping up with your health is more important than ever

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends we all avoid crowds and close contact with others and stay at home as much as we can. With this guidance, it may feel challenging to stay connected with others while also maintaining your health routine.

Here's some more help from the CDC:



Take breaks

Give yourself a breather from watching, reading or listening to news stories and social media. Hearing about coronavirus repeatedly can be upsetting. Instead, limit exposure to media and monitor the situation through government websites like [www.USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) and [www.CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).



Connect with others

Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.



Take care of your body

Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.



Make time to unwind

Try to do some other activities you enjoy.



Ask for help

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.



Keep healthy distances

The CDC recommends we all maintain what's called "social distancing," which means avoiding close contact with others to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 or spreading it. For your safety and well-being, stay 6 feet away from others who are coughing or sneezing, and avoid crowds as much as possible. If you do need to get out, remember to thoroughly wash or sanitize your hands before and after visits, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.



Keep a healthy routine for your mind

While social distancing can make us feel lonely and socially isolated, there are still lots of ways you can stay connected, be active and maintain meaningful relationships with others:

- **Call and text** with friends, family and neighbors
- **Video chat** others from your laptop, tablet or smartphone using Facetime, Skype or other video chat technologies
- **Perform using video chat**, like playing an instrument for friends or reading a bedtime story to a child
- **Use social media** like Facebook, Instagram or other platforms to connect with old friends and share pictures with others
- **Mail cards or handwritten letters** to loved ones
- **Volunteer to write letters** to someone battling depression through www.lettersagainst.org/volunteer
- **Email others**, sending pictures and sharing stories
- **Check out virtual programming** from local institutions, places of worship, community centers and more
- **Create new traditions** like virtual book clubs, virtual outings and even virtual dance parties with family and friends
- **Take up a new hobby** that you've always wanted to try, whether it's yoga, daily meditation or learning a new language through free mobile apps
- **Play online games** like word scramble and cards using free mobile apps or websites
- **Go outside** to enjoy porch sitting, gardening or chatting with neighbors from safe distances
- **Get active** by going on walks around your neighborhood or exercising on your porch or patio area

Make it a goal to connect with at least one friend or family member every day. You don't need to physically be with someone to be connected—it's about sharing your feelings, experiences and old memories with each other that enhances our relationships.

Stay positive during your social interactions by offering positive support. Showing compassion can help lift each other's spirits and reduce feelings of loneliness and create genuine, meaningful relationships.

Call those in need in your community. Broaden your sense of connection and service to those in need by making friendly phone calls to others in need of support. Contact your local neighborhood associations or national organizations like www.littlebrothers.org to get involved.



Connect with these resources for help

There are resources in your community to help you create and build social connections.

Your support with your health plan

Some health plans may include mental or behavioral health support. Plans may also include virtual appointments for medical and/or behavioral healthcare, allowing you to receive care without leaving your home. Call the number on the back of your health plan member ID card to see what benefits may be available.

Disaster Distress Line

Call for immediate counseling for anyone who is seeking help in coping with the mental or emotional effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1-800-985-5990 (TTY: 711),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
www.samhsa.gov

Mental Health America

Access local and online support groups, mental health programs and services and more.

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Eldercare Area Agencies on Aging

Find trustworthy, local support resources for older Americans and their caregivers.

1-800-677-1116 (TTY: 711),
Monday – Friday,
9 a.m. – 8 p.m. Eastern time
www.eldercare.acl.gov

AARP Foundation's Connect2Affect

Connect with a network of local programs and resources to build social connections.

www.connect2affect.org

Institute on Aging's Friendship Line

Call this toll-free line for a friendly conversation and the caring ear of a trained volunteer. Accredited for people age 60 and older as well as adults living with disabilities.

1-800-971-0016 (TTY: 711),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Caregiver Support

Connect with caregiving experts to help you find the right information you need to help you navigate your complex caregiving challenges.

1-855-227-3640 (TTY: 711),
Monday – Friday,
8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Eastern time
www.caregiveraction.org

Learn more about COVID-19

For more information, go to [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

This information is provided for educational purposes only. It is not to be used for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. Consult your doctor before beginning any new diet or exercise regimen.