

# Managing Daily Life During the Coronavirus Outbreak

EAP Article Series



A large-scale health crisis can fill you and your family with feelings of fear and uncertainty, but it's important to know that you're not helpless—there are many ways you can help keep your mind and body healthy during challenging times.

If you feel like you and your family are experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, you're not alone. It's common to have those feelings during a health crisis, along with many other mental and physical reactions. Acknowledging how you're feeling can help you put coping measures in place.

## Common Reactions During This Crisis

- **Fear and anxiety** about the virus spreading or affecting someone you know
- **Difficulty concentrating** and being preoccupied with the virus during daily tasks
- **Helpless or powerless** about what will happen in the future
- **Insomnia** due to anxiety and worrying
- **Irritability** and becoming easily angered or annoyed
- **Hypervigilance** while monitoring the news or taking precautions
- **Physical reactions** such as headache, upset stomach, increased heart rate, muscle tension, difficulty eating or sleeping

## Ways to Cope During a Health Challenge



**Stay connected with family, friends, co-workers or others in your daily life.**

Because of the need for social distancing during the coronavirus outbreak, finding new ways to communicate with our network is essential. We have many virtual options that allow us to work from home, as well as contact friends and family. It's important to talk with friends, family, coworkers, faith mentors, or anyone else you trust, about your feelings and concerns.



**Keep a consistent daily routine — even if it means creating a new one.**

Try to follow as many typical activities as possible to give you feelings of predictability and control. Decide on common-sense adaptations to some of your daily activities that fall within the recommended precautions during the crisis.

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## Ways to Cope (cont.)



### Take physical care of you and your family.

Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water, while avoiding alcohol, drugs, caffeine and nicotine, as these can make anxiety worse, interfere with sleep and wear down your immune system. Try to take part in some type of exercise every day and get seven to nine hours of sleep a night.



### Relax your mind and boost your mood.

Try using deep breathing, meditation, prayer or other relaxation techniques that work for you. This can include limiting your exposure to stressful news coverage. Take time to do activities that you enjoy and create opportunities to have fun. Find ways to give help and positive encouragement

to others, which can bring new perspectives to both you and those you're helping. And be gentle with yourself – *enjoy some simple pleasures in your daily life.*

## We're in This Together

Reach out to support systems to get the mind and body care you need. Remember, there are some things that are out of your control, so focus on the things that you can have an impact on. Try to keep in mind that we're all dealing with this together and we're learning new ways to cope—rely on each other for advice on how to manage your daily life.



### For other resources and assistance

Visit [MutualofOmaha.com/eap](https://MutualofOmaha.com/eap) or call an Employee Assistance Program professional at **800-316-2796**.

## Key Facts From the CDC

### **Fact 1: Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.**

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they're not at risk for spreading the virus.

### **Fact 2: For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.**

Older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease or heart disease, are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

### **Fact 3: Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.**

### **Fact 4: There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay home when you're sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash

### **Fact 5: You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms.**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

### Seek medical advice if you:

- Develop symptoms

-AND-

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

For the most up-to-date information, visit the CDC's coronavirus disease site at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus).

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