



# CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

**In the midst of the current epidemic, it is crucial to make your mental health wellness a priority just as much as your physical health. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recommends the following strategies to better care for your mental health.**

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.
- 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 and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do some other activities you enjoy to return to your normal life.
- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.
- Stress Less and Move More! As much as we live for weekends and love vacations, having “forced” time off from school and work can create a lot of very real stress, even apart from the threat of illness. Focusing on the negative aspects, however, does not make the negative aspects go away. In fact, the more we fret, the worse we feel—and our mindsets just go downhill from there.
- Be diligent about re-directing your thoughts away from stress and fear and toward health and togetherness. Use this opportunity to get outside with the kids, where the air is fresh and the germs are fewer. Movement is one of the very best ways to relax a worried brain and activate a sense of calm. Play, inhale deeply, exhale slowly, get your heart rate up, and take an active role in keeping all of the members of your household as healthy and as positive as possible during this time of uncertainty.
- Strengthen self-care. During these anxiety-provoking times, it’s important to remember the tried-and-true anxiety prevention and reduction strategies. Get adequate sleep, exercise regularly, practice mindfulness, spend time in nature and employ relaxation techniques when stressed. Prioritizing these behaviors during the coronavirus crisis can go a long way toward increasing your psychological well-being and bolstering your immune system.
- Seek professional help if you need it. People who are vulnerable to anxiety and related disorders might find the coronavirus epidemic particularly overwhelming. Consequently, they might experience anxiety symptoms that interfere with work, maintaining close relationships, socializing or taking care of themselves and others. If this applies to you, please get professional help from your doctor or a mental health professional. Cognitive behavioral therapy and certain medications can successfully treat anxiety problems.

**REMEMBER IF YOU ARE IN AN IMMEDIATE CRISIS, PLEASE CALL YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER OR 911.**

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19 & ILLINOIS' RESPONSE CAN BE ANSWERED OVER THE PHONE AT 1-800-889-3931 OR VIA EMAIL [ATDPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV](mailto:ATDPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV)

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/2019-NCOV/INDEX.HTML](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

**HARTGROVE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY  
SERVICES IS AVAILABLE 24/7/365 AT:**

**773-413-1700**