

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Mental health

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak impacts everyone; disrupting lives and routines around the world. It is very important during this time that while you are taking the preventive measures, you shouldn't forget about your mental health and that of your friends, your family and especially children and adolescents. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is also creating stress, panic, fear and increasing the anxiety among people which is common and natural in this type of situation.

Though anxiety is the natural response, it functions as an alert system that helps us stay vigilant and respond to potential dangers; it should not escalate to interfere with daily health and wellness.

Mental health stress can affect us in many ways and everyone reacts differently, such as:

- Fear and worry about your own health and of your loved ones
- Panic buying (e.g. toilet paper and canned goods)
- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping
- Changes in eating patterns
- Frustration, irritability, or anger
- Feeling helpless
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

### How to cope with stress, anxiety or distress?

- Remind yourself that COVID-19 is a serious but temporary illness, and that life will return to normal in time
- Make time to consider how to take advantage of unexpected flexibility in your daily routine
- Create a schedule for yourself and your children
- Social isolation means physical distancing. Stay connected with your friends, family and others by e.g. telephone, text, FaceTime, or video chatting
- Try to do some engage in other activities you enjoy
- Take breaks, hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting
- Avoid rumors and fake news
- Stay connected to your official health news and recommendations for accurate information
- Take care of your body
  - Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
  - Exercise regularly (including stretching and deep breathing exercises)
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Mindfulness meditation for stress reduction
- Avoid increase use of smoking, alcohol or other drugs

### Children and adolescents:

- Try not to pass your anxiety on to your children
- Reassure your children that they are safe with the measures being undertaken
- Parents take time to talk to children about what's happening, listen to their concerns and answer their questions realistically
- Maintain regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing
- Encourage children to draw, write, or journal so they can express their feelings
- Parents can teach good hand-washing practices and let them children know that all the adults in their life are working hard to keep them safe
- Give them extra love and attention

For more information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) visit [www.educateyourhealth.com](http://www.educateyourhealth.com)