

The Complete Guide to  
**COVID-19**  
**(Coronavirus)**  
**for Seniors**

THE  
ARBOR  
COMPANY

COMPLIMENTS OF



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# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Chapter 1: Coronavirus – COVID-19 – And the Risk for Seniors.....	5
Chapter 2: How to Stay Safe .....	8
Chapter 3: Safety Best Practices From Our Communities .....	11
Chapter 4: Staying in Touch When Visiting is Limited .....	12
Chapter 5: Staying Active While Staying Inside .....	15
Chapter 6: Resources for Seniors and Their Families .....	20
Chapter 7: Plan of Action – What to Do If You Get COVID-19 (Or Think You Might Have It).....	22
Chapter 8: Staying Sane While Staying Safe: Weathering Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak.....	27
Chapter 9: Hope for the Duration .....	30



## INTRODUCTION

In a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, knowledge is power. On the other hand, misinformation and ignorance can cause real harm — to yourself and to others — as well as needless worry.

The Arbor Company, a senior living provider with more than 30 years of experience, assembled this information to inform seniors, including our residents, potential residents and their families, about the COVID-19 pandemic. We turned to reliable sources like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for medical information as well as our experienced staff, who work daily serving seniors and their needs. We hope this information will assist you and your family in staying healthy and prepared.



# CHAPTER 1: CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19 – AND THE RISK FOR SENIORS

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus, part of the family of viruses that cause a number of respiratory illnesses, including the common cold.

A person with COVID-19 typically experiences symptoms from two to 14 days after infection. Symptoms can range from mild to severe, and can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. At this time, experts believe that COVID-19 spreads person-to-person through a cough, sneeze or any close contact.

## Why is it called a “novel” virus?

You may have heard COVID-19 called a “novel” virus. That means it’s brand new, and no one has immunity to the disease (with the likely exception of those people who have recovered from confirmed cases of COVID-19). Because it’s a new disease, scientists around the globe are racing to learn more.

The medical community is literally learning new information about COVID-19 hour by hour. Keep in mind that what you hear on the news today could be different tomorrow. That’s not because you were misinformed, it’s because doctors are learning more as they get more experience treating those with symptoms and more data. Your best source for the latest information is the CDC [website](#).

## **Who's at risk for COVID-19?**

One thing that does seem clear — while adult patients of all ages can become critically ill with COVID-19, older adults are at higher risk. Those with underlying conditions, like heart disease, lung disease (COPD, asthma, etc.) or suppressed immune systems, are more likely to become ill and more likely to die from the virus.

According to the CDC, eight out of 10 deaths due to COVID-19 in the United States have been adults age 65 and older. Among those adults with confirmed COVID-19 reported here, the estimated percent who ended up requiring hospitalization included 31%-70% of adults age 85 and older and 31%-59% of adults ages 65 to 84. The estimated percent of COVID-19 patients requiring intensive care was 6%-29% of adults age 85 and older and 11%-31% of adults 65-84 years old. Mortality rates are estimated at 10-27% of adults age 85 and older and 4%-11% of adults 65-84 years of age.

## **Isn't COVID-19 just like the flu?**

You may have heard early reports indicating that COVID-19 is “just like the flu.” Medical experts disagree. While the flu does kill a number of older adults every year, the data so far suggests that COVID-19 is much more deadly and more contagious. That's a recipe for significant pressure on the healthcare system in our country.

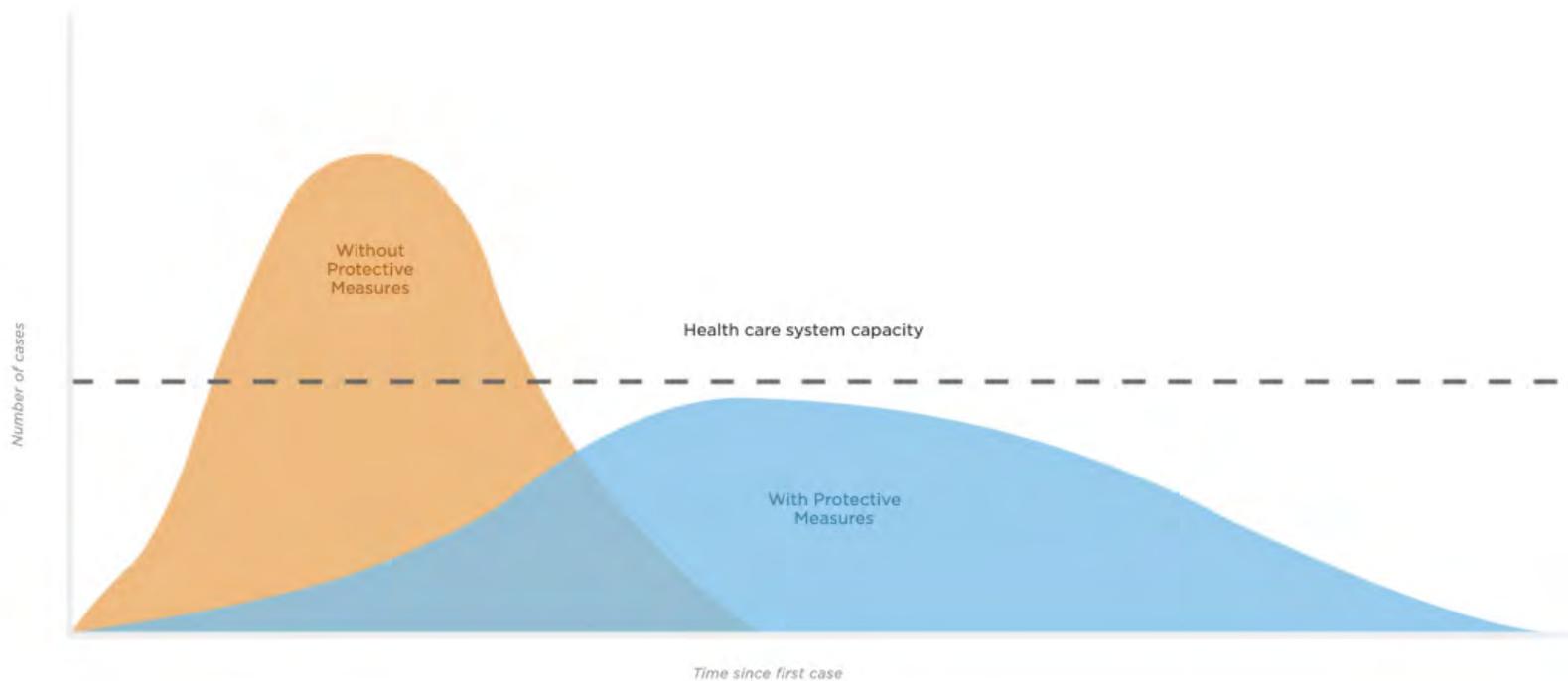
Doctors are worried not just about the overall death rate but also the potential for overwhelming the medical system. Each community has only a limited number of the ICU (intensive care unit) beds and ventilators available to treat people with COVID-19.

You may have heard about the need to “flatten the curve.” That means slowing the spread of the disease so that local medical facilities aren't overrun. While it's important to minimize the number of people infected, the current priority of public health officials is to minimize the number infected in the first wave of patients.

## Prepared, not panicked

These are all cause for concern, but they are not reasons to panic for extreme fear. For any individual, the chances of becoming seriously ill or dying of COVID-19 still remain relatively low. Instead of panicking, focus your efforts on calmly taking action. Take precautions to keep your risk to a minimum, especially if you're in a high-risk category. Be prepared, not panicked!

Sources: *CDC, WHO*





## CHAPTER 2: HOW TO STAY SAFE

“Being proactive” is the best way to approach any challenge in life. With the COVID-19 pandemic, proactive steps will save lives. Since doctors don’t yet have a cure or a vaccine, you and your family must take proactive steps to protect yourselves.

Here are some guidelines we’ve provided for our independent living residents. They’re applicable to anyone who wants to stay safe:

**Keep your hands clean.** Wash them often using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you’re not able to wash them, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is the next best option. Choose a sanitizer that’s at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then wash your hands.



**Disinfect!** Clean and disinfect any surfaces that people touch often: phones, keyboards, handrails and doorknobs.

**Stay home.** Avoid large crowds. Postpone any travel plans. If you must go to the grocery store, venture out in the early morning or other times when it's not busy. At restaurants, use the drive-through and opt for take-out rather than eating there. Work from home if you can. If you do go out, practice “social distancing” – staying at least 6 feet away from others and avoiding handshakes or hugs.

**Practice good health habits.** While always a good idea, it's especially important now to get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, drink lots of fluid and eat nutritious food.



**If you're not sick, hold off on the mask.** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend wearing a face mask to protect yourself from COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses. However, if you're sick with COVID-19 or being evaluated for possible infection, wear a face mask around other people to help prevent spreading the virus. Similarly, if you're taking care of someone with COVID-19 (or being evaluated for the virus COVID-19), a mask will help protect you while you are in close contact with another person.

**Be prepared.** Stock your pantry with food staples so you can avoid extra trips to the grocery store. Keep your supply of medications stocked; ask your pharmacist if you can get an extra supply as a precaution. Look into delivery options that allow you to avoid venturing out.

**Have a plan if you experience symptoms.** If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath, contact your doctor. Avoid going to the doctor's office if possible; call first for instructions. Arbor community residents should stay in their residence and alert the community's executive director. Even if you don't suspect COVID-19, stay home if you're sick for at least 24 hours after a fever is gone.

[See Chapter 7 - Plan of Action](#)

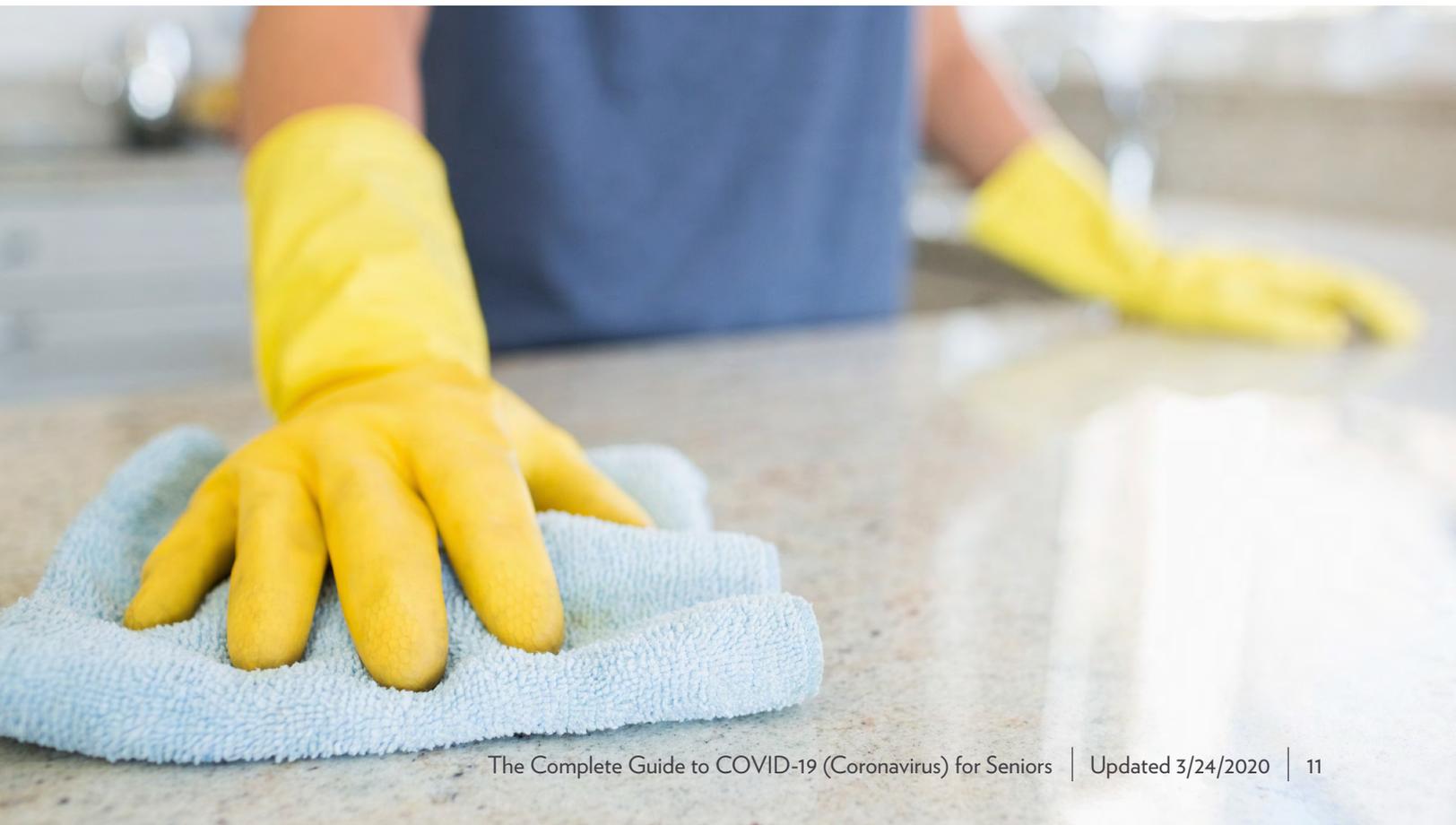




## CHAPTER 3: SAFETY BEST PRACTICES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

At Arbor Company our priority is the health and safety of our residents and staff, so we take matters like the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic very seriously. Therefore, we have put many proactive measures in place to keep our residents as safe as possible during the outbreak. [Click here](#) for the latest.

We're not permitting any visitors until further notice — with the exception of extreme or emergency situations — and we're screening all health care providers who enter our communities. We've also implemented additional cleaning procedures and adjusted our dining room operations to help reduce the threat of infection.





## CHAPTER 4: STAYING IN TOUCH WHEN VISITING IS LIMITED

Most senior living communities, including those operated by The Arbor Company, are prohibiting any visitors during the COVID-19 crisis. Older adults are at higher risk for serious illness and even death, particularly those with underlying health problems such as heart disease, diabetes or compromised immune systems.

Unfortunately, seniors who may already be confined to home or a senior living community are now even more likely to feel isolated and to miss their families. So how can you stay in touch with your loved one during this time? You can always call on the phone or write a note to say hello, of course. But with creative uses of technology, you can find ways to “reach out and touch” your loved one without physical contact that might put his or her health at risk. Here are a few ideas:

**Social media.** Is Mom or Dad on Facebook? Post photos, funny videos or memes to keep them updated on what’s going on with your family and to share what’s on your mind. If a video of a giggling baby brightened your day, why not share it with your senior loved one, too? (Concerned about privacy? Take a moment to learn how to use Facebook’s privacy settings. If you’re posting a photo of a child, for example, use the settings so that only your family members, or a select group of people, can see. If you want to share with just a few people, select the “Only Me” privacy setting for the post, then tag those people you do want to see the post.)

**Text.** If your loved one can receive texts on his or her cellphone, use that for regular updates and check-ins. You don't need major news – just share about the weather in your neighborhood or what you're making for dinner. It's the connection that counts. Depending on the model of cellphone, you may also send photos and links.

**Digital photo frames.** Digital photo frames (with brand names such as NixPlay or Skylight Frame) allow you to send photos via email directly to the frame in your loved one's home. You'll need to get the gadget set up with a WiFi connection to get started. But once that's done, you can send photos any time you like. They'll pop up automatically on your loved one's digital picture frame.

**FaceTime.** If you and your loved one both have connected Apple devices, you can video chat via Apple's FaceTime feature. To keep usage to a minimum, make sure you're connected to WiFi if possible when using FaceTime.

The following options are available to residents in Arbor Company communities.



**Sagely.** If you aren't already using the real-time, cloud-based Sagely Family App, it's time to get started. It's a fun and easy way to keep in touch. Download the app and stay in constant touch with your loved, following his or her daily activities in real time. Using the app, you can take a look at the community's calendar of events and see when and how your loved one is participating in our social activities throughout the day. Our Engagement staff occasionally posts pictures, so that you can feel reassured that your loved one is staying active and making new friends!

**iN2L.** Arbor's "It's Never 2 Late<sup>®</sup>" (iN2L) user-friendly, person-centered technology brings the world to our residents – it's a great resource when visitors are limited. Of special interest right now is the Family Connection, which provides easy-to-use Skype and email so that residents can stay in touch. Ask your community's engagement director to help you get connected to your loved one if you haven't already. The best part: Even seniors with little or no computer experience can use and enjoy iN2L. In addition, iN2L also gives residents access to brain games, and spiritual topics (devotionals, scripture studies, sermons from multiple faith traditions), classic TV, movies, sports, travel, history and physical fitness resources. Each resident has a separate log-in, allowing quick access to favorite apps, personalized content and "customized memories" such as personal photos and videos.

If you don't already have a tech solution in place, the Engagement staff in your loved one's Arbor community will be glad to assist in helping set something up. However, we do ask you to please be patient. Team members are assisting many individual families at once during this unprecedented situation.

With some ingenuity and a little patience, we will find ways to help family members stay in touch. And we will get through this!



## CHAPTER 5: STAYING ACTIVE WHILE STAYING INSIDE

Unfortunately, you'll need to postpone visits if your loved one lives in a senior living community, including Arbor communities, or if you have any reason to suspect you may be exposed to COVID-19 yourself.

But if you're already staying at home with your older loved one, and have taken these precautions, you may be wondering how you will pass the time in the next few weeks and possibly months. We've got some ideas for indoor activities for seniors that will help you enjoy your "quarantine" together.

-  **YouTube:** Many classic old TV shows and TV commercials are available on YouTube. Using your iPad or other device, ask your loved one about his or her old favorites and then watch them together.
-  **Puzzles:** Puzzles are fun at any age, but studies suggest that jigsaw puzzles and other "brain teasers" can help keep the mind sharp and possibly delay the effects of diseases like Alzheimer's. Pick up an inexpensive puzzle, set it up on a card table and work on it a little at a time.
-  **Board and Card Games:** Break out a deck of cards or a board game like Monopoly, and enjoy this fun, easy way of spending time together.



**Home Movies:** You know all those videotapes and video files you've collected over the years but never actually watched? Now's a good time to dig them out and watch them. Pop some popcorn and turn it into a party. Take this opportunity to collect favorites to have them digitized so that you can easily watch them at any time.



**Online Classes:** YouTube offers thousands of tutorials for everything from how to tie a man's tie to knitting and basic home repair. Take a class online and try something new with your loved one. (Or, if you've always wanted to ask Mom to teach you how to crochet or to make her special biscuits, now's the time!)



**Storytelling:** Older people have many interesting life experiences and much wisdom to share – yet almost no one asks. Invite your loved one to share his or her most interesting or favorite memories. Ask leading questions: Dad, can you tell me about your first job, delivering newspapers as a kid? Mom, what did you eat when money was tight during the Depression? You'll be amazed at how meaningful it is for an older adult to have someone listen to him or her.



**Cooking:** Cook a favorite dish for your loved one or with them if they're able. If your loved one has dietary restrictions, find some quick and easy recipes online and try adapting them to your loved one's needs.



## STAYING ACTIVE WHILE STAYING INSIDE

When you're stuck indoors, it's tempting to sink into the couch and stay there. If you're in the habit of going to the gym, walking at the mall or taking a water aerobics class, you'll need to find a new routine and a new way to get that exercise during this period of sheltering-in-place.

Remember, just 15 minutes of gentle, daily exercise can significantly improve health for older adults. A study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, found that older adults who exercised spent 25% less time disabled or injured than those who did not. Other research shows that physical activity can boost mood; add extra years to your life; help you maintain or lose weight; reduce the impact of illness and disease like Alzheimer's; and enhance mobility, flexibility and balance.

(If you're new to exercise, talk to your doctor about your physical fitness goals. Wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes, drink plenty of water and consider having another person around in case you fall or need help.)





Luckily, there are plenty of ways to stay active inside, even if you don't have a home gym. Here are some ideas:

**Chair Exercises:** If you have mobility issues, consider trying some chair exercises with someone. Here are four chair exercises, with video demonstrations, to get you started.  
<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/4-chair-exercises/>

**Indoor walking:** If you live in a senior living community, walk through the halls. If you're at home, walk around the house. Clear any items that might pose a fall hazard, including electrical cords. Or, try marching in place to a little music!

**Stretching exercises:** Flexibility exercises can help offset the effects of normal decline in joint flexibility and help you remain active and independent. Here's a good stretching routine, with video instruction, to get you started.  
<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/stretching-for-seniors-7-simple-moves-for-the-not-so-flexible/>

**Exercise videos:** Remember those Jane Fonda workout videos from the 1980s? No need to fiddle with a videotape these days — search online for fitness videos. The National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health has a great collection of free “Go4Life” exercise videos tailored to older adults on YouTube. <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/workout-videos/>

**Fitness apps:** One AARP study showed that two-thirds of respondents age 50 and older found fitness trackers to be beneficial. Check the app store for your smartphone, tablet or other digital device for fitness apps that can help you attain health goals like weight loss, track how much you have walked or teach yoga and simple exercise routines.

**Balance exercises:** Balance training exercises strengthen the muscles that help keep you upright to improve stability and help prevent falls. Here’s a video with three basic balance exercises to get you started. [https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/sample\\_workout/3-balance-exercises-older-adults/](https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/sample_workout/3-balance-exercises-older-adults/)

**Strength exercises:** Strength exercises, also called resistance training, work your muscles using resistance. These can mean using your own body weight (push-ups, wall push-ups, pull-ups, crunches or leg squats), lifting weights or using resistance bands or weight machines at a gym. Strength training helps prevent age-related muscle loss; keeps your bones strong; prevents falls; and promotes mobility and balance. Here are some strength exercises you can do at home with no special equipment: <https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/strength-training-for-seniors/>

Finally, remember that during the pandemic, it’s important to stay isolated but not necessarily indoors. If you are able, and the weather is good, it’s fine to take a walk or visit a park. Just keep your distance – at least 6 feet away – from others.

*Bonus: All of the above ideas work well when it’s too hot to go out, or the weather’s bad, too!*



## CHAPTER 6: RESOURCES FOR SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The good news for seniors: There are many new options available for keeping stocked and supplied during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Delivery services:** Many online services and apps will deliver groceries, restaurant meals and even medications to your home. Your favorite grocery store or pharmacy may offer delivery or curbside services now, even if they have not in the past. Call or visit the store's website for details. Ask whether there is a fee for delivery. Some charge a fee, some offer free delivery and some offer free delivery with a minimum order.

**To-Go Meals:** Many restaurants that previously offered "dine-in only" meals are now pivoting to provide To-Go meals, curbside service or even "Quarantine Packs" of fresh meats and vegetables, milk, eggs and groceries. Visit a restaurant's Facebook page or website, or call them to see what options they're offering.

**Online connections.** The Apple iPhone FaceTime (for iPhone 6 and higher) platform now allows you to video chat with one or more friends or family members who also have iPhones. Open the FaceTime app on your iPhone and tap +, then choose those you'd like to chat with.

**Telemedicine.** If you're sick — whether you suspect COVID-19 or not — don't go straight to the doctor's office. Unless it's an emergency, call your doctor's office and ask how to proceed. Avoid the waiting room for your own safety and the safety of others. Some hospital systems are now offering online "virtual visits" especially for those who suspect they may have COVID-19. The doctor's office website may ask about your health history and symptoms and determine your best next steps. (Check with your insurance provider also to be sure you're covered.)

**CDC.gov.** During any crisis, there's one thing that spreads as fast as the virus: misinformation. Bad information can be dangerous and cause unnecessary worry. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is your best ally for the latest and most reliable information. Another good source is the World Health Organization's [website](#).



## CHAPTER 7: PLAN OF ACTION

### What to Do If You Get COVID-19 (Or Think You Might Have It)

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you may be infected, you should take steps to take care of yourself AND help prevent the virus from spreading to people in your home and community.

Some people will be able to stay at home and recover without going into the hospital. However, older adults and anyone with serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19. In those cases, seek medical care as soon as symptoms start.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [extensive guidelines](#) for how to care for yourself or a sick person at home, if appropriate, which should be followed along with your doctor's orders. Note that these guidelines may change as new information becomes available.

Here are the basic steps for caring for yourself and your family at home should you suspect you have COVID-19:

**Call your doctor:** If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as a cough, call your healthcare provider for medical advice. Don't go into the doctor's office until the doctor instructs you to do so.

**Isolate:** Stay at home if you have COVID-19, if you suspect you might have it or if you think you've been exposed to the virus. Do not go out and do not have visitors. Remember that even though your case may be mild, you can infect others who may become critically ill or even die. Do not leave your home except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas. Avoid public transportation. Stay home!

**Cover:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

**Dispose:** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.

**Wash hands:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available.

**Clean and disinfect:** Regularly clean any high-traffic, high-touch items and areas in your home, including phones; remote controls; counters; tabletops; doorknobs; bathroom fixtures; toilets; keyboards; tablets; and bedside tables. When using a disinfectant, be sure to follow the instructions on the label. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are killed. Many also recommend precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

**Don't touch:** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Wear a facemask:** If you are sick, you should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.

**Stay separate:** If someone in the home is sick or known to be exposed to COVID-19, keep them as far as possible from others. The sick or exposed person should stay in a specific "sick room" and, if possible, use a separate bathroom.

**Hydrate:** Make sure the sick person drinks a lot of fluids to stay hydrated and rests at home. Ask the doctor what over-the-counter medicines may help with symptoms.

**In an emergency:** Call 9-1-1 and alert dispatch that you or your loved one has or may have COVID-19. This will help first responders to protect themselves and other patients. Symptoms which indicate a possible emergency include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*Note: This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.*

**Limit contact with pets:** Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more information is known. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick with the virus. *(If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. Consult the CDC website for more information.)*



## WHEN YOU'RE THE CAREGIVER: Caring for someone with COVID-19 (or possible COVID-19)

In addition to the above precautions, keep these suggestions from the CDC in mind if you're caring for a sick person at home.

**Wear a mask:** If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. When caregivers enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask.

**Do not share:** Do not share dishes; drinking glasses; cups; eating utensils; towels or bedding used by the sick person with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water or put in the dishwasher and or laundry.

**Clean:** Clean high-touch surfaces in your isolation area ("sick room" and bathroom) every day. If you're sick, let a caregiver clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in other areas of the home. If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect a sick person's bedroom or bathroom, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver/other person should wear a mask and wait as long as possible after the sick person has used the bathroom.

**Wash:** If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while laundering. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.

**Monitor:** Pay attention and alert a doctor if the person's symptoms worsen. Have the healthcare provider's contact information on hand. Know the emergency warning signs. Follow care instructions from the healthcare provider and local health department. Local health authorities will give instructions on checking for symptoms and reporting information.

### **When You Recover**

People with COVID-19 who have stayed home (home isolated) can stop home isolation under the following conditions:

1. You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (i.e. three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
2. Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
3. At least seven (7) days have passed since your symptoms first appeared, OR you have been tested and received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

In all cases, follow the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department. The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your healthcare provider and state and local health departments. Local decisions depend on local circumstances.



## CHAPTER 8: STAYING SANE WHILE STAYING SAFE: **Weathering Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

In just a few weeks life has changed for many people due to efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The constant updates, warnings and changes to routines are more than enough to cause anyone to feel anxious.

Anxiety can be even more likely among people over age 60 and among those who have chronic conditions that put them at high risk for developing severe and dangerous complications as a result of COVID-19.

In spite of the uncertainty and concerns for the health of loved ones, it is possible to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety related to the pandemic. Here are a few things you can do to help quell your anxiety or share with a loved one who is struggling with anxious feelings.

### **Focus on facts, not rumors**

While it is stressful to hear all of the updates about COVID-19 and how it may affect you and your family, it is important to understand the facts. Focus on understanding key facts by getting updates from reputable health sources like your local health department, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization. Once you understand the facts about how to prevent the spread of the virus, you can take action.

Avoid reading information that isn't verified or by a true expert in health care. If you are in doubt, compare it to information from the reputable sources above to see if it's rumor or fact. Don't allow rumors to cause you to focus on things that aren't helpful and may even be harmful.

### **Give yourself a break from the news**

We all need to be informed, but we don't have to consume every new update 24 hours per day. If the news about the virus, event cancellations and more are causing you stress, take a break. Turn off news notifications on your phone, take a break from reading online posts and turn away from television or radio news for a few hours or more each day.

Alternatives to binging on news updates include watching a favorite movie or television show that makes you laugh or takes your mind off the pandemic. Read a book that is not related to current events. Bake or cook something comforting or make time to engage in another hobby that you can do at home.

### **Honor your schedule and your health**

Even as things change around you, do your best to maintain your normal sleeping schedule and a healthy diet. Try to get plenty of sleep, incorporate movement into your day and eat regular meals. Take your medications as normal and stay hydrated.

You are likely to feel even more anxious if you change your routine and lack sleep.

## **Ask for help when you need it**

If the feelings of anxiety are overwhelming and you feel isolated, ask for help. Call a family member or friend to explain how you're feeling. Just talking to someone else by phone, may help you feel more balanced. And they may be able to reassure you and make suggestions that you haven't thought of due to stress.

If you need additional assistance, Medicare covers many benefits to care for your mental well-being, including psychological counseling, preventive screenings, and outpatient treatment programs. Ask a trusted medical professional for a referral.

In addition, find out what your community is doing to keep people connected remotely.

Many churches, synagogues and religious organizations are offering their services online or via telephone dial in. Just knowing that others are worshipping at the same time and keeping your routine as close to normal as possible may help. And your house of worship likely has members or staff who would be happy to talk with you about resources and options.

Staying connected to others, even by phone, text and email, is important for our emotional health.

## **Sources**

[CDC](#)

[Psychology Today](#)



## CHAPTER 9: HOPE FOR THE DURATION

With all the restrictions in place around the United States, many are asking: How long will this last?

Unfortunately, the current answer is that no one knows. Experts currently estimate that we will face some kinds of restrictions to help contain the spread for COVID-19 for months to come.

It's likely we can get back to normal — or at least see much less drastic measures — once a COVID-19 vaccination is ready for the general population. Experts expect that will take at least a year. (A vaccine must be tested for safety before a mass vaccination program can begin.)

In the meantime, we have a few miles of bad road ahead. In most parts of the country, the situation will get worse before it gets better.

During World War II, people talked about “the duration” — that time until the war ended. They didn’t know when the war would end, and we don’t know this crisis will pass. All we can do is focus on staying healthy and hopeful for the duration.

So, it’s a good time to remind ourselves: Americans are a resilient and resourceful people. If we come together as a nation, we can weather this crisis.

We’re led by the example of you — America’s seniors. In his book, “The Greatest Generation,” author Tom Brokaw stated that for members of the World War II generation, at “every stage of their lives they were part of historic challenges and achievements of a magnitude the world had never before witnessed.” That generation’s perseverance through difficult times was a testament to their extraordinary character. Born and raised in a tumultuous era marked by war and economic depression, Brokaw wrote, these men and women developed values of “personal responsibility, duty, honor and faith.”

These same values will get us through this challenge. If we all take personal responsibility — avoiding crowds, staying in as much as possible — the outbreak will soon be contained. If we do our duty and honor the leadership of medical and government officials — isolating ourselves if we’re sick or suspect we’ve been exposed — we will avoid infecting others. If we have faith, we’ll get through this with a spirit of hope and optimism for the future.

If you're old enough to remember the Great Depression or lived through a world war or a recession, you know that troubled times eventually pass. You know that during difficult times, our character is tested and revealed. Faith, family and friends can sustain us.



Know, too, that the example of older Americans continues to inspire during this crisis. Among younger people, there's a meme going around on social media: "Our grandparents were called on to fight a war. We're being called on to stay home and watch NetFlix. We can do this!"

*Stay safe, stay healthy  
and stay home!*

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