

Dear Patient,

We understand that the news about the COVID-19 illness can be frightening and overwhelming. The news is constant and seems to be changing all the time. Please be assured that your healthcare providers are taking this matter seriously and following the most up-to-date guidelines that are available.

At times like this, when we quite literally have no control over a situation, our stress can be majorly increased. It is frustrating to face a challenge that you cannot even see. Here are few tips that may help you manage the worry:

- Consider using social media to connect with loved ones, but try limiting your health information to a few trustworthy news sources and avoid the social media hype.
- The social distancing that the public is being asked to do is necessary to slow down the spread of the disease, but it can cause a lot of anxiety, loneliness and even depression. Please find ways to stay socially connected even while socially distancing from others. Pick up the phone. Send a text. Talk to the neighbor who is WAY across the street. Some people are singing and dancing on their balconies. Whatever you need to do to stay at a distance, but still feel like you are engaged in our community and with loved ones.
- It is important not to neglect your overall health. Try to eat healthy food, to get a good night's sleep and exercise, even if it is just marching in place or doing some stretches. Try to find time for fun activities. Get creative. Break out the Monopoly. Take up bird watching.
- Children are not immune to the stress of this disease. Watch out for signs that they may be struggling, such as excessive worry, irritation, crying, withdrawal, and difficulty concentrating. Encourage them stay as socially active as they can, create a routine for them and talk to them about the disease with factual information at a level they can understand to decrease needless worry.
- Breathe. No really, take a few minutes and just breathe.



- Please ask for help if you need it. Watch for signs that you are really struggling, such as difficulty sleeping, crying, using substances or alcohol to cope with stress, having constant worry or fear, or experiencing panic attacks. If you start to have more severe symptoms, such as thoughts of suicide, call a friend and contact your healthcare provider right away. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is 1-800-273-8522.

WE WILL GET
THROUGH
THIS TOGETHER