



Coping With COVID-19

By Eric Endlich, PhD



Facing a pandemic such as COVID-19 can be stressful and scary.

There are continuous news reports of outbreaks and other developments. How can you remain calm?

- **Manage your media exposure.** Staying current on important changes (e.g., travel bans) is appropriate, but it's not necessary to check news outlets multiple times a day.
- **Stay connected with friends and loved ones.** Try to discuss various topics, not just the current crisis. Schedule regular video chats or phone calls.
- **Maintain routines when possible.** If your old routines (e.g., leaving for work) aren't possible, establish new ones such as daily walks or exercise.
- **Seek out meaningful, productive activities.** Make something creative, clean out an overstuffed closet or take an interesting course online.

Many of these strategies apply to helping children cope, too. Additional steps to support them include:

- **Correcting any misinformation.** Encourage precautionary measures, but provide appropriate positive information as well. They should know, for example, that even if family members get sick, most likely they will recover.
- **Allowing them to express their feelings.** Show that you understand what they feel by mirroring their communication ("sounds like you're pretty worried") without disputing it. Let them know that being frightened is perfectly normal.
- **Providing verbal and physical comfort.** Reassure them, but avoid false promises.
- **Instructing them on ways to stay healthy.** These steps include good hygiene (especially handwashing), nutrition, rest and exercise.
- **Remaining patient.** They look to you as an example for how to cope. Know that the situation, while challenging for everyone, is temporary.

Produce 3 Ways

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

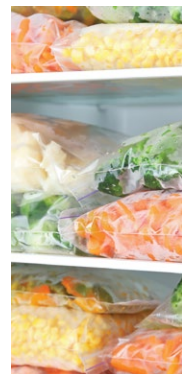
There's always nutrition research that's up for debate — is saturated fat harmful or helpful? Is a low-fat or low-carb diet better? But the one thing all health professionals agree on is the importance of eating enough vegetables and fruit.

Vegetables and fruit are filled with fiber, vitamins, minerals and important antioxidants. They help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer. Best habit: Fill half your plate with colorful produce at every meal. Whether your choices are fresh, frozen or canned, what's most important is that you get your daily intake.



Go fresh: If you live where fresh vegetables and fruits are economical and readily available year round, stock up on your favorites and enjoy. Some hardy and affordable options are carrots, beets, squash, celery, pears, apples and broccoli. Buy berries in season and freeze them.

Rely on frozen: Studies that test the vitamin content of fresh vs. frozen produce show that frozen options often edge out the fresh options. Why? Because frozen fruits and vegetables are picked and packed at the height of their nutrient value, and freezing locks in the vitamins. However, the vitamins in fresh produce may degrade while they are shipped and stored. Both are still nutritious, so choose what you prefer.



Stock cans: Canned vegetables and fruit are economical and convenient, and they have a long shelf life. If possible, choose those with no added salt or sugar. Rinse those that have added salt or sugar.

Remember that canned and frozen produce are convenient and help reduce food waste, because they last longer than fresh produce. They are all good for you.

Mobility and Exercise

Explore your movable options.

Most of us can exercise without full physical mobility. Do you have arthritis, a chronic illness, a severe weight problem or another ongoing physical or mental condition? Some level of regular exercise is possible when it's suited to you.

Regardless of your age or condition, regular exercise can help you feel stronger throughout the day. With your health care provider's guidance, here are 3 key fitness pursuits to consider.

- 1. Cardio strength:** If you're overweight or have arthritic knees, you can still exercise your heart and burn calories with soft workouts. Routine walking may be the best low-impact cardio workout if you keep a brisk pace; wear good supportive shoes. Or try elliptical and bike exercise. For upper body strengthening, consider body bands.
- 2. Muscle health:** Do you use a wheelchair? Focus on upper body strengthening with free-weight workouts; wheel yourself about outside daily. For chronic back pain or a shoulder injury, work your leg and core muscles.
- 3. Stretching:** Even with limited movement in your legs or back, you can enjoy better flexibility and comfort through daily stretching. And it may help prevent or delay further muscle loss.



Regular exercise can also powerfully affect your mental health, especially when coping with long-term physical challenges. During exercise, your body releases endorphins that energize mood and stamina, ease stress, boost your self-confidence and improve your outlook on life.

Maybe you can't move as well as you want to, but you have the same need to protect your health and future as people without disabilities.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

Top Reasons for Health Care Visits

Primary health care providers are usually the first health care professional you see when you have health concerns. This person can be a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner. They:

- 1. Identify and resolve sudden medical problems.** They include influenza, pneumonia, stomach or intestinal virus, bladder infection, broken bones and other injuries. Providers also may prescribe medications and behavioral change.
- 2. Treat you for chronic conditions.** For example, your provider can help you cope with ongoing back pain, insomnia or depression, and guide you with disease management. The most common chronic conditions primary providers help us control include hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, elevated cholesterol, asthma, IBS and obesity.
- 3. Refer you to a specialist.** When a condition warrants it, your provider will help coordinate additional care. For example, following a heart attack, you could regularly see a cardiologist. Once you are stabilized on the proper medications, the cardiologist would likely refer you back to your primary care provider for continued monitoring and treatment.
- 4. Guide you with self-care measures to help you avoid or control disease.** Your provider will do vaccinations and perform annual physical exams that can include bloodwork and screenings for various diseases and conditions. Providers teach patients how to minimize lifestyle risks that could lead to future diseases. For example, if you have high blood pressure, your provider may advise you to manage or avoid it through dietary changes, quitting smoking and regular exercise, in addition to medication.

Treating Acne

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD


For people with acne, whiteheads, blackheads and other pimples appear on the face, chest and back. This can cause discomfort, emotional distress, and sometimes scarring. You can try over-the-counter products, such as benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid, or ask your health care provider for help if your acne doesn't improve.

Prescription medications: These help control breakouts and reduce scarring. Acne may get worse before it improves, usually in 4 to 8 weeks, with prescription medications including the following:

Topical medications: Retinoids are made from vitamin A; applied in the evening, they may help prevent plugging of the hair follicles. Topical antibiotics are used once or twice daily to kill skin bacteria. They are sometimes combined with benzoyl peroxide to reduce antibiotic resistance. Azelaic acid is another antibacterial acne cream. Dapsone gel is sometimes recommended for inflammatory acne.

Oral medications: Antibiotics by mouth are used to treat moderate to severe acne, usually for the shortest time possible. Women with acne are sometimes prescribed oral contraceptives or the drug spironolactone. People with severe acne that has not improved with other treatments may be given isotretinoin, which must be monitored closely for side effects.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **4 Rs for Restoring Health**, is at personalbest.com/extras/20V6tools.  6.2020