



Coping with Stress

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us have faced challenges that were stressful and overwhelming. Learning to cope with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and those around you become more resilient. It's normal to feel stressed.

Stress can cause:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration;
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests;
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions;
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares;
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes;
- Worsening of chronic health problems;
- Worsening of mental health conditions;
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances.

Help yourself, others, and your community manage stress.

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.** Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use. Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider. Get your COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others.** Speak with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community, including your faith-based community.** Try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail as long as social distancing measures are in place.

Put on your oxygen mask first.

- When we travel by plane (remember those days?) the flight attendants remind us to "*put on our own oxygen mask before helping others*". The "oxygen mask" principle applies in our current situation. As stated above, self-care is vitally important during times of high stress. Focus on you so that you are best equipped to help others. Drink lots of water (it boosts immunity!), take walks, turn the phone on silent, and allow yourself to take a moment to breathe. Your well-being is worth it!

Check out more safety talks and alerts at: www.susumc.org/workplace-safety/