



Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

What You Should Know

When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease such as Ebola, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress—even when the outbreak affects people far from where you live and you are at low or no risk of getting sick. These signs of stress are normal, and may be more likely or pronounced in people with loved ones in parts of the world affected by the outbreak. In the wake of an infectious disease outbreak, monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones. Know how to relieve stress, and know when to get help.

Know the Signs of Stress

What follows are behavioral, physical, emotional, and cognitive responses that are all common signs of anxiety and stress. You may notice some of them after you learn about an infectious disease outbreak.

YOUR BEHAVIOR:

- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

Know When To Get Help

You may experience serious distress when you hear about an infectious disease outbreak, even if you are at little or no risk of getting sick. If you or someone you know shows signs of stress (see list at left) for several days or weeks, get help by accessing one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him- or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.



Know How To Relieve Stress

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:

Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak. You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where many people have gotten sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.

GET THE FACTS:

Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information. Learn from them about the outbreak and how you can protect yourself against illness, if you are at risk. You may turn to your family doctor, a state or local health department, U.S. government agencies, or an international organization. Check out the sidebar on the next page for links to good sources of information about infectious disease outbreaks.

KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY:

- Eat healthy foods, and drink water.
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
- Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Get physical exercise.

YOUR BODY:

- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

YOUR EMOTIONS:

- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

YOUR THINKING:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions

USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO RELAX:

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, wash your face and hands, or engage in pleasurable hobbies.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family.
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends often.



Take care of your physical health to help lower your stress. Take a break to focus on positive parts of your life, like connections with loved ones.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY, FEELINGS, AND SPIRIT:

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of thinking and feeling about this event, and think of how you handled your thoughts, emotions, and behavior around past events.
- Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty, or angry is common after an event like an infectious disease outbreak, even when it does not directly threaten you.
- Connect with others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak. Talk about your feelings about the outbreak, share reliable health information, and enjoy conversation unrelated to the outbreak, to remind yourself of the many important and positive things in your lives.
- Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need.

Sources for Credible Outbreak-Related Health Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
<https://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-974-3000
<http://www.who.int/en>

Helpful Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA)

5600 Fishers Lane

Rockville, MD 20857

Toll-Free: 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

Email: info@samhsa.hhs.gov

SAMHSA Store: https://store.samhsa.gov

SAMHSA Hotlines

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746

SMS (español): "Hablamos" al 66746

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Website in English: https://

www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov

Website in Spanish: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/
disaster-distress-helpline/espanol

SAMHSA's National Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral
Information Service in English and español)

Website: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-
helpline

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454

TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)

Website in English: https://

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Website in Spanish: https://

suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol

Treatment Locator

Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

Website: https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home

SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515

Email: DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov

Website: https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac

**Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*



INFORMATION ON CORONA-VIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) OUTBREAK AND GUIDANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

At the end of 2019, a novel coronavirus (a specific virus that causes human and animal disease) was identified as the cause of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei Province of China. It rapidly spread thereafter, resulting in an epidemic throughout China, with quick spread globally, affecting now nearly every continent. Understanding of this novel coronavirus is still evolving.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET INFECTED?

The virus can spread from infected animals (most likely started in China from wild animal consumption), but human-to-human transmission is possible also. It spreads like any other respiratory disease, through contaminated air-droplets that come out of the mouth of infected persons when talking, coughing or sneezing. The virus can survive in the environment from a few hours to a few days (depending on the surfaces and the environmental conditions) and touching affected surfaces and then the mouth or nose is thought to be the way of transmission. The virus is killed in the environment with alcohol-based solutions.

HOW SEVERE CAN THE INFECTION BE?

The good news is that it is usually a mild disease and around 98% of affected people survive the disease. The majority of cases (>80%) are mild (showing only minimal flu-like symptoms) and people can recover at home. Some cases though (around 14%) are severe and very few (around 5%) can develop critical illness. Some people have no symptoms, or have only mild symptoms of a common cold. But in other people, COVID-19 can lead to serious problems, like pneumonia or even death. This is more common in people who have other health problems, particularly the elderly, those with cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease and hypertension. **People with diabetes are among those high risk categories that can have serious illness (just like the flu) if they get the virus.**

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS OF THE ILLNESS?

People affected with COVID-19 can have fever, cough, shortness of breath (trouble breathing), feeling tired and having muscle aches. Problems with breathing happen when the infection affects the lungs and causes pneumonia. Symptoms usually start a few days after a person is infected with the virus, with most cases occurring approximately 3-7 days after exposure. But in some people it can take even longer for symptoms to appear (up to 14 days).

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A CHANCE OF INFECTION?

If a person has a fever with cough or trouble breathing and might have been exposed to COVID-19 (if they lived in or visited China in the 14 days before they got sick, or if they had been around a person who may have had the virus), they should call their doctor or nurse for advice. IT IS BETTER NOT TO RUSH TO THE HOSPITAL ON THEIR OWN, SO THAT THEY DO NOT TRANSMIT THE DISEASE TO OTHERS AND ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE TO BE SEEN BY MEDICAL PERSONEL WITH PRIORITY, IF NEEDED, INSTEAD OF WAITING IN THE LINE. If they are advised to go to the clinic or hospital, they will need to put on a face mask. The medical staff might also have them wait some place away from other people, so that they can be examined properly, with safety. Fluid samples taken from the nose or throat will show if the virus is present or not. There is no specific treatment for the disease up to now, but since the majority of cases is mild, only very few people will have to be hospitalized for supportive care. It is essential though that cases are recognized and isolated for a couple of weeks, and other people that had been in contact with them also identified, so that the virus will not be spread more.



WHAT TO DO IF INSTRUCTED TO STAY AT HOME?

For affected people who stay at home, patients and families should practice proper measures for infection prevention and control. Management of such patients should focus on prevention of transmission to others and monitoring for clinical deterioration, which may prompt hospitalization. Affected persons should be placed in a well-ventilated single room, household members should stay in a different room or, if that is not possible, maintain a distance of at least 1 m from the ill person (e.g., sleep in a separate bed) and perform hand hygiene (washing of hands with soap and water) after any type of contact with patients or their immediate environment. When washing hands, it is preferable to use disposable paper towels to dry them. If these are not available, clean cloth towels should be used and they should be replaced when they become wet. To contain respiratory secretions, a medical mask should be provided to the patient and worn as much as possible. Individuals who cannot tolerate a medical mask should use rigorous respiratory hygiene – that is, the mouth and nose should be covered with a disposable paper tissue when coughing or sneezing. Caregivers should also wear a tightly fitted medical mask that covers their mouth and nose when in the same room as the patient.

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE WITH DIABETES DO IF THEY GET SICK WITH THE VIRUS?

It is better that people with diabetes plan ahead of time about what to do before they get sick, for example have telephone numbers of their health care provider at hand and have adequate stock of medications and consumables for monitoring blood glucose at home, so that they do not need to go out in case of illness or should the situation impact e.g. local pharmacy opening times. If they get sick with the virus, they may see their glycaemic control deteriorate during the illness. They should practice the “Sick day rules” recommended for any stressful situation in order to ameliorate their diabetes decompensation. They should contact their health care provider immediately for advice regarding how often to monitor their blood sugar, get adequate refills for medications (especially insulin) and what adjustments they may need to do in their medicines or diet.

SICK DAY RULES FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

- Keep hydrated
- Monitor your blood glucose
- Monitor your temperature
- If you are on insulin, also monitor your ketone bodies
- Follow your healthcare team recommendations

HOW COULD THE DISEASE BE AVOIDED?

Simple, sensible measures should be taken in every-day life in order to avoid the disease:

- Frequently wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based solution, especially before eating and after being in public.
- Don't share food, tools, glasses and towels.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick. If someone is visibly ill, coughing or sneezing, keep away.
- If you get sick with respiratory symptoms, stay at home and notify others and your health care provider of the illness.
- When sneezing or coughing, cover the nose and mouth with a tissue or with the crook of the elbow. Throw the tissue in the bin.
- Avoid unprotected contact with wildlife and farm animals.
- The World Health Organization recommends that for people without respiratory symptoms, wearing a medical mask in the community is not required, even if COVID-19 is prevalent in the area; wearing a mask does not decrease the importance of other general measures to prevent infection, and it may result in unnecessary cost and supply problems.

Diabetes, COVID-19 and Depression - Let's talk

Fear, uncertainty, anxiety and depression are important issues to be addressed in the current pandemonium of COVID-19, especially for patients with Diabetes. Lets talk to overcome them.



If you see two or more of these symptoms please be aware and ask for help



- Loss of interest and pleasure in any activity
- Disturbed sleep (Too much or too little)
- Disturbed appetite (Too much or too little)
- Feeling of guilt or low self-worth
- Poor concentration and performance
- Medically unexplained symptoms like headache, backache
- Neglecting personal hygiene
- Excessive crying / anger
- Refusal to do daily work

Few tips to overcome these challenges in the current lockdown period..!¹

- **Reframe your mindset from "I am stuck inside" to "I can finally focus on my home and myself"**
- **Stay close to your normal routine**
- **Talk to your loved ones on the phone**
- **Try to be physically active. Do moping, dusting or simple exercises at home**
- **Avoid intake of alcohol or smoking and increase the intake of healthy diet**
- **Be grateful..! Stay optimistic, healthy and happy..!**
- **Use telehealth as an option to talk to a professional if your anxiety/ depression becomes unmanageable**

The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified healthcare provider with any question you may have regarding a medical condition or medical treatment. Changing Diabetes® and the Adibud logo are registered trademarks of Novo Nordisk A/S.

1. Adapted from recommendations from ADA Diabetes and depression association of America; <https://ada.onlinenurse.com/learn-from-us-from-the-experts/blog/2020/04/06/covid-19-lockdown-guide-how-to-manage-anxiety-and-depression>



FAQs for Patients with Hypertension, Diabetes and Heart Diseases in view of Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic

Are patients with heart disease, diabetes or hypertension at increased risk to get coronavirus infection?

No, people with hypertension, diabetes or heart diseases are at no greater risk of getting the infection than anyone else.

Among people with above diseases is there an increased risk of severe illness or complications once infected?

The majority (80%) of people diagnosed with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms of a respiratory infection (fever, sore throat, cough) and make full recovery. Some of the people with diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases including Heart Failure (weak heart) may develop more severe symptoms and complications. Therefore extra care is advised for these patients.

Are people with diabetes more prone to Covid-19 ?

In general, you know that people with uncontrolled diabetes are at increased risk of all infections. People with diabetes are not at higher risk for acquiring the infection, but some individuals are prone to more severe disease and poorer outcomes once infected. Hence, follow your diet and exercise routine (to the extent possible), take your medications regularly and test your sugar levels frequently so as to keep your diabetes under control.

When diabetic patients become sick, they may require frequent monitoring of blood glucose and adjustment of drugs including insulin, small frequent meals and adequate fluids.

Some tips for those with diabetes, hypertension and heart disease:

Take your medicines regularly - It is very important

Make sure that you take all medications prescribed regularly as before even if you are mildly symptomatic. Don't stop any medication unless advised by your doctor. Continue with your blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease medications in case you are unable to visit your doctor. Medications to control cholesterol (statins) should be continued.

What about reports about BP medications increasing severity of COVID-19 ?

After review of available information the consensus of various scientific societies and expert group of cardiologists is that currently there is no evidence that the two group of drugs- ACE inhibitors (eg. Ramipril, Enalapril and so on) and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) (eg. Losartan, Telmisartan and so on) increase the susceptibility or severity of COVID-19. These drugs are very effective for heart failure by supporting your heart function, and controlling high blood pressure. It maybe be harmful to stop these medications by yourself. This can worsen your heart condition.

What can I take pain or fever?

Some type of pain killers(called NSAIDs) like Ibuprofen is found to worsen the

COVID-19. Such drugs are known to be harmful to heart failure patients and may increase your risk of kidney damage. Avoid NSAIDs or take them only when prescribed by your doctor.

Paracetamol is one of the safest pain killers to use if needed.

Control blood pressure (BP), blood sugar and do regular physical activity

It is also important to control your risk factor levels – Avoid smoking and alcohol, have your BP and blood sugar levels under control and have some form of regular physical activity (However, please modify your out-door activities according to the norms of social-distancing.). Follow the diet and salt restriction as advised. If you are a non-vegetarian, you can continue to be so. Increasing the fibre and protein content of the diet and more vegetables and fruits in diet is advisable.

What should I do if I get symptoms suggestive of COVID-19?

In case you get fever, cough, muscle pain without shortness of breath, call your doctor and seek advice on phone. You need to stay at home (at least for 14 days) and avoid close contact with other family members and maintain hand hygiene and correctly wear a medical mask.

If there is shortness of breath or worsening symptoms like excessive fatigue call/visit your doctor (further advice will depend on advise of your physician)

What should you do to prevent COVID-19?

Covid-19 is spread by coughs and sneezes, through what are called droplets (tiny amount saliva or other secretions expressed through cough/sneezing or even after a hearty laugh) and through touch . When you touch an object that has the virus particles on it, the virus may

get onto your hands and when you touch your face, you may get infected. Virus particles can persist upto 3 days and therefore it is important to maintain hygiene of your surroundings. Wash the rooms , tables and other surfaces with floor cleaners or even simple soap solution and sanitize your hands with hand sanitizers or by washing when you touch unknown or suspicious surfaces.

What are the important steps you can do to prevent acquiring or spreading infection

1. Social distancing – Very important .

- A. Avoid contact with someone who shows symptoms of possible COVID-19 - anyone having a cold or cough or fever.
- B. Avoid non-essential travel and use of public transport.
- C. Avoid public places, crowds and large family get togethers. Keep in touch with friends and relatives using phone, internet, and social media.
- D. Avoid routine visits to hospitals / Labs. for minor problems, contact hospital or HF clinic by phone or helpline number if possible. If you are regularly checking INR and adjusting blood thinning medicines, please contact the doctor over phone if possible and try and avoid a hospital as much as possible.

2. Hand hygiene

- A. Avoid handshakes and touching face with hands
- B. Wash your hands with soap and water frequently – do this for at least 20-30 seconds and systematically to clean all parts of the hand
- C. Alcohol based hand-sanitisers are also useful.
- D. Avoid touching possibly contaminated areas/objects – Public toilet doors, door handles etc.

KNOW

What is the novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. The novel coronavirus is a new strain, not previously identified in humans. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the latest discovered coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

How does the virus spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus through inhaling small droplets from people with COVID-19 who cough or sneeze or through touching contaminated surfaces.

What are the symptoms?

Many people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others.

The symptoms include a combination of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscle pain
- Tiredness



Insert national link here
www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china

KNOW, PREPARE, PROTECT

Information on COVID-19 for people
with chronic diseases, their family
members and care givers

NATIONAL INFORMATION ON COVID-19

[National information]

[National number +xx xxx xxx xxx]

For further information:

[national website]

www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china

PREPARE

What to do if you have a chronic disease?

How can you prepare yourself

- Educate yourself on COVID-19 from trusted sources.
- Refill your prescription medicines or consider using a mail-order for your medications.
- Have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (e.g. tissues, thermometer) to treat fever.
- As much as feasible, keep physically active to ensure good physical condition.
- Have enough groceries and household items, approximately 2-4 weeks. Prepare gradually and avoid panic buying.
- Activate your social network. Contact family, friends, neighbours or community health care workers in advance and make joint plans on what to do when COVID-19 is spreading in your community or if you become ill.
- Follow instructions from national authorities on how to prepare for emergencies.
- Continue to practice general hygiene.

What do you do if you fall ill?

If you become ill with symptoms of cough, fever and difficulty breathing:

- 1 Stay home and call your local health care services for advice.
- 2 Mention what chronic disease you have.

PROTECT

How can you protect yourself and others



Clean your hands often. Wash your hands with soap and water or, if not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Before eating, after using the toilet;
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
- After having been in public places;
- After having touched surfaces in public places;
- After having touched other people.



Avoid contact with sick people, in particular those with a cough.



Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes.



Avoid meetings, events and other social gatherings in areas with ongoing community transmission.



Practice social distancing if COVID-19 is spreading in your community:

- Avoid crowds, especially in confined and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Do your grocery shopping at off-peak hours.
- Avoid using public transport during rush hours.
- Exercise outdoors instead of indoor settings.



If you develop cough, once COVID-19 is spreading in your community, use medical facemasks. This will protect those around you from getting infected.