

COVID-19

Corona-virus Disease 2019 (COVID 19) emerged in humans in December 2019. It originated in exotic animals but has evolved with an ability to infect humans as well. Much of the present alarm is due to the speed with which the virus spreads. However, based on observations so far, most people who get the virus do NOT die and many do not even feel sick. Some of those for whom we are most concerned are older individuals and those with underlying health conditions. Efforts presently in effect (i.e., school/business closures, travel restrictions, etc.) are largely intended to slow the spread of the disease and also to protect individuals who are more vulnerable to serious illness and death. By slowing the spread of COVID 19, it is hoped we can sustain adequate resources in the healthcare system so those who are most vulnerable can get the care they need. Hopefully we can also reduce the amount of suffering for the rest of us as well.

Important Numbers

JBER Mental Health and Primary Care Behavioral Health:

1-907-580-2181

JBER Appointment Line:

1-907-580-2778

TRICARE Nurses Adviceline:

1-800-TRICARE option 1

SAMHSA Free 24-hr Disaster Distress Helpline:

1-800-985-5990

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Coping with the Uncertainty of COVID 19



Coping With

COVID 19 Anxiety



Everyone reacts to stressful situations differently. A disease outbreak can cause fear or worry about your own health and that of loved ones. Some of the biggest challenges are the uncertainty about risk and the impact of a disease that is not well understood. Uncertainty can increase stress with other known challenges such as being quarantined or financial hardships.

Build up in stress and anxiety can also cause or increase problems such as sleep difficulty, poor concentration, negative emotional states, uncontrolled negative thoughts, and changes in appetite/eating. It may even contribute to problems of physical health.

The following tips may help reduce some of this stress:

- ◇ Focus on things you CAN control such as developing a plan to implement hygiene recommendations in your home and work spaces.
- ◇ Though "distancing," find ways of staying connected with friends and loved ones. Intentionally plan a phone call or video chat to a few people daily.

- ◇ Set a limit on how much news you get and from which sources you get it. Thirty minutes a day or less should be sufficient to stay informed.
- ◇ Seek out news on positive developments in the fight against the pandemic.
- ◇ Continue to prioritize your own physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. Keep a daily routine, even if it has to be modified from time to time. Include active self-care in your routine.
- ◇ Think about ways you can help others. Perhaps you can assist an isolated neighbor with groceries or make an activity kit for someone that may be quarantined.
- ◇ If you have children, answer their questions honestly but as positively as possible. Ensure they also have a planned daily routine and encourage creativity in finding new ways to have fun. Limit their exposure to news and filter unhelpful news sources.



Coping With Quarantine

Separation from loved ones and/or support systems, fear of spreading symptoms, potential stigma, loss of freedom, boredom, and uncertainty over disease status can all affect those who are in quarantine. If you are quarantined or must self-isolate, remember:

- ◇ You are helping others by limiting exposure to people who may be more vulnerable than you.
- ◇ Though isolated, you are not alone. Keep connected using technology. Follow your doctor's guidance about what to do if your symptoms get worse. Mental health services may also be available to you (contact 907-580-2181 for details).
- ◇ Reach out to others if you run out of needed items or have financial concerns.

How to Pass Time If Quarantined:

- ◇ **Stay connected!** Do not rely solely on social media. Call, text, video chat!
- ◇ Make a plan for each day. Schedule activities to prevent boredom. If sufficiently healthy, keep some kind of exercise in your routine. Try to maintain a normal nighttime sleep schedule, even if needing more sleep during the day.
- ◇ Explore a new hobby; stream a new show; craft; watch a concert on-line; organize or do housework; catch up on classwork; cook etc.
- ◇ Find ways to be active if possible. Find body-weight workouts, get your steps in, do yoga etc.
- ◇ Check for updates from reliable resources (e.g., CDC, WHO, NIH).