

Seniors Wellness in Challenging Times

A COVID-19 resource for seniors & those who care for them.

It's important to maintain mental and physical wellness during challenging times. Here are some ways that can help you stay mentally and physically healthy.

Understanding change and stress

Stress is a normal response to danger. When you sense danger or feel threatened or uncertain about the future, your body tries to protect you by releasing stress hormones, which cause changes in your body. Distress or negative stress can be short-lived or long-term. You may feel emotions like fear or anxiety. It can also lead to physical changes like digestive problems or aches and pains. You may notice trouble with thinking clearly or thinking about the same thing over and over. You may find you are having sleep problems or are irritable. All of these symptoms can be signs of stress. There are ways that you can manage your stress to help you feel better and keep you healthy.

How can seniors cope with change and manage stress?

- Maintain meaningful relationships with others.
- Reach out to family and friends by phone, email, video calls, or texting.
- Connect with neighbours in ways that keep you and them safe.
- Use free delivery services, or ask friends or family to pick up things or do other errands for you.
- Try to keep up daily routines as much as possible.
- Try something new or dust off an old project you've been meaning to do.
- Share how you are feeling with others. Others likely feel the same way.
- Listen to others' feelings. It's nice to feel understood (e.g., "I feel worried for my kids." Response: "Yes. That's hard.").
- Find something funny to have a good laugh.
- Stop throughout the day and take a few deep breaths, especially if you feel anxious.
- Maintain physical activity by going for a walk or being active at home.
- Eat healthy food and maintain a regular sleep routine.

- Seek professional help if you are having difficulty coping day to day.

Media and information gathering on COVID-19

There is a large amount of information about COVID-19 on the TV, the radio, the newspaper, and the Internet. Too much information can actually increase stress. Try to limit the amount of time you spend on COVID-19 news. Use reliable sources of information such as: www.ahs.ca/covid and www.alberta.ca/covid.

Prepare for potential illness or quarantine

- Make a neighborhood or family plan to check in with older family members and neighbours.
- Keep a two-week supply of canned or frozen foods, pet supplies, cleaning supplies, and hygiene items.
- Refill prescription medications regularly and keep a supply of over-the-counter medications (i.e., fever and pain medications).
- Most drug stores will deliver to your home, so order your prescriptions to allow time for delivery.
- Keep cellphones and tablets charged.
- Schedule phone calls and video chats to stay in touch.

Numbers to call for help and support (Toll-free available 24/7)

Emergency	911
Mental Health Helpline	1-877-303-2642
Addiction Helpline	1-866-332-2322
Crisis Services Canada	1-833-456-4566
Health Link	811
Family Violence Info Line	310-1818
Alberta 211 (social supports resources)	211

Other resources

AHS Addiction and Mental Health: www.ahs.ca/amh

AHS Help in Tough Times: www.ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes

Elder Abuse Support: www.albertaelderabuse.ca