

Take charge of coronavirus-related anxiety

The coronavirus (also called COVID-19) is in the news daily. The number of cases is rising. There are health recommendations based on your location. It is increasingly important to stay focused and take measure of your situation and feelings. You may normally manage life's ups and downs, but this news can be causing you stress and disrupting your daily life.

An event such as a health emergency is always changing. This can cause people to feel anxiety, even when they normally don't. Symptoms of anxiety include:

- Intense worry
- Fatigue
- Panic
- Obsession
- Nightmares
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Sleep problems
- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Sweating

There are steps you can take to address your anxiety around the coronavirus or any other stressful situation.

1. **Take control of the situation.** There are preventive measures you can take to avoid getting the coronavirus, such as washing your hands; not touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and disinfecting your home and work area. For more suggestions, refer to the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) websites.
2. **Take care of yourself.** Eat nutritious food, exercise, limit alcoholic drinks, and make sleep a priority. Stay connected with family and friends so that you don't feel alone.

3. **Stay informed by learning the facts.** The news isn't always accurate. Be sure to get your information from authoritative sources, such as the [CDC](#) and the [WHO](#).
4. **Think about the impact you have on others.** Be sure to care for yourself. Take preventative measures seriously. Remind family and friends how important it is for them to take care of themselves too.
5. **Limit your exposure to the news and other media.** The news cycle is 24 hours. Watching for too long can make you feel overwhelmed.
6. **Let it go.** Don't dwell on what may or may not happen regarding the coronavirus. Change what you can and let the rest take its course. Refocus your mind and try to think only about positive things.

If you still feel stressed and anxious even if you take these steps, you can call your primary care physician, who may refer you to a behavioral health specialist. You can also call CTBHP at 1-877-552-8247, or look for a behavioral health provider on the CTBHP website at <http://www.ctbhp.com/members/mbr-findprv.html> Another option is to call the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline](#) at 1-800-985-5990. This is, a 24/7, 365 days-a-year, national hotline. They provide immediate crisis counseling. It is toll-free, multilingual, and confidential.

