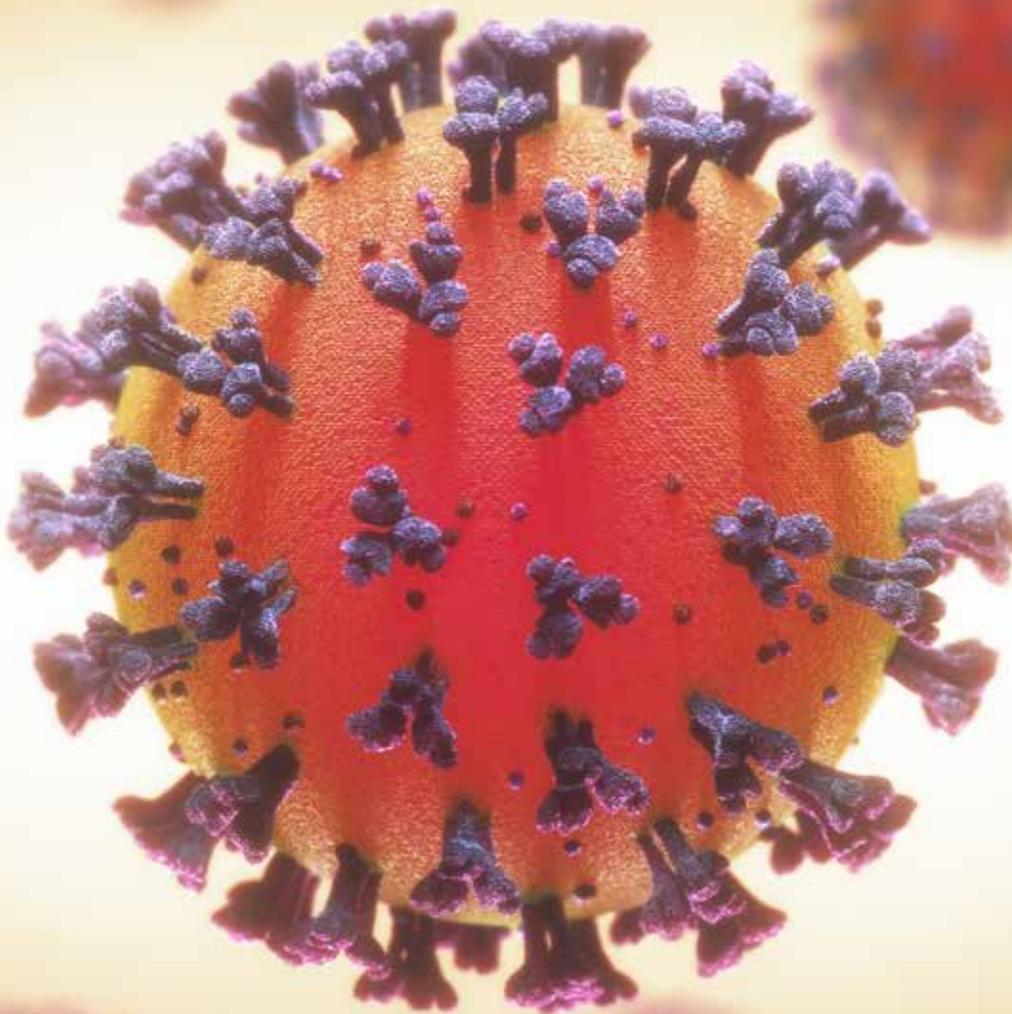


MARCH/APRIL
2020



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Our hearts and thoughts are with everyone affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are focused on the health and well-being of you and your family.

This special edition of HealthyLife® Letter was created to share information and resources to help you stay healthy and safe, with a focus of what you can do at home. Many of you are spending most of your time at home: working from home, with children at home because of school closings, and because of social distancing measures currently in place. We hope this special edition will help you to **stay informed** and to **take action** as you navigate this new 'normal' over the next weeks.

Be well!

Simple ways to get better sleep



Lack of sleep can affect the body in many ways. Beyond just feeling tired, long-term sleep deprivation may be linked to health problems such as heart disease, obesity and depression. Getting enough quality sleep also helps keep our immune system healthy so we can fight infections like the coronavirus and COVID-19.

Try these tips to get better sleep each night:

- **Have a consistent schedule.** Get up at the same time each morning and go to bed at the same time each night. This will help to set your body's internal clock. Over time, you'll fall asleep quicker and may sleep better throughout the night.
- **Skip screens.** The light given off by smartphones, tablets and computers can actually keep you awake. Avoid electronics in the evening, at least 2 hours before bedtime.
- **Think about skipping naps.** Although a nap may feel great when you're tired, it could be causing more sleep problems. Napping can interfere with your sleep schedule and make you too alert at bedtime. If you have trouble falling asleep at night, skip the nap and get to bed a little sooner.
- **Get moving.** Exercise during the day has been shown to improve sleep quality. Walking, jogging, or any activity you enjoy can be helpful. Don't exercise within 2 hours of bedtime, though, if you have trouble falling asleep.
- **Be careful about caffeine.** That afternoon cup of coffee could still be in your system at bedtime, making it difficult to fall asleep. Try to avoid soda, tea and coffee after lunch.
- **Don't smoke.** Nicotine interferes with sleep and harms your health in many other ways. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor or visit [smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) for free help with quitting. It's never too late to quit.
- **Don't eat a big meal before bed.** Heavy meals can interfere with sleep and make you restless. Eat dinner about 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. If you need a snack, make it small and light, such as yogurt and fruit or a handful of nuts.

9 easy ways to manage stress

Don't let the stress of the coronavirus and COVID-19 take over your life! Here are some stress busters you can do right in your own home. Try to do one (or a few!) of these things to start feeling better:



Connect with friends

Meeting up with other people (including online!) can help reduce symptoms of stress and increase feelings of happiness.



Meditation

Meditation, such as mindfulness, is a proven way to help reduce stress.



Deep breathing

Slow, deep breaths can calm the body's stress response and help you relax.



Playing with pet

Walking the dog or petting an animal companion may calm you.



Yoga

Practicing yoga can help the body relax. Try using yoga videos at home or attending a local class.



Listen to music

Music helps the body cope with stress. Listen to music that makes you feel happy or relaxed.



Read a book

Escape to another world and take your mind off the day with a favorite book.



Exercise

Regular exercise has many benefits, including improving your mental health and managing stress.



Massage

A massage not only feels good, but it can help reduce stress and muscle tension.

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



cdc.gov/COVID19

SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include

FEVER



COUGH



*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms

Wash away the 5 most common handwashing myths

By now, you've seen a lot of information about the need to wash your hands to help prevent or slow the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19. So, let's test your knowledge about the best way to clean your hands:

1. It doesn't matter how long I wash my hands as long as I use soap – FALSE

The next time you're in the restroom and washing your hands, think of the chorus of your favorite song. Studies show that you should scrub your hands with soap for a minimum of 15-30 seconds in order to effectively remove germs.

2. Hand sanitizers can replace washing your hands with soap and water – FALSE

Washing hands with soap and water is the best and most effective way to reduce the number of microbes and germs on hands.

Although alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, they are not as effective as soap and water when it comes to removing and inactivating dangerous gastrointestinal illness-causing germs.



3. The hotter the water you use for handwashing, the better – FALSE

Studies show that water temperature does not affect germ removal. In fact, there is no research to prove that higher temperatures improve the effects of handwashing at all. Hotter water can also dry out skin, which leaves your skin more susceptible to germs and can make handwashing painful. It is best to wash your hands with the temperature that you find comfortable.

4. You don't have to dry your hands after washing them – FALSE

Studies show that germs can be more easily transferred to and from wet hands, which is why drying hands is essential to removing as many germs as possible after handwashing.

5. Hand dryers are more hygienic than paper towels – FALSE

Researchers found that paper towels are superior to air dryers and can help remove bacteria, unlike air dryers, which can increase bacteria counts. Because air dryers have been shown to spread bacteria between 3 and 6 feet from the device, paper towels are also far less likely to contaminate other restroom users.



Hands that look clean can still have icky germs!

Wash Your Hands!



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Easy protein snacks

A great way to get healthy protein throughout the day is to make snacks with protein. The protein can help you feel fuller, holding you over until your next meal. These snacks may also help avoid a blood sugar crash that leaves you feeling sluggish and even hungrier than before. What's more, getting adequate protein is a key part of having a healthy immune system. Try these ideas for tasty and easy-to-pack snacks:



Hummus with sliced peppers, carrots, celery or cucumbers.



Peanut butter or almond butter with a banana.



¼ cup of nuts, such as almonds, walnuts or pistachios with fresh fruit.



Roasted pumpkin seeds (buy them roasted or bake on a cookie sheet at 300° for 20 minutes).



Tortilla with black beans, salsa and a sprinkle of low-fat cheese.



Roasted soy nuts (available at many supermarkets).



A hard-boiled egg with leafy greens.



Low-fat string cheese with an apple or pistachios.

Freeze food for later



Make more than you need and freeze foods in portion sizes for future meals.

STEP 1. Cool foods “slightly” at room temperature before refrigeration. A food does not need to be completely cool before it is refrigerated.

STEP 2. Cool foods to refrigerator temperature before bagging them for your freezer. LOOSELY cover food in the refrigerator. This allows heat to escape and protects the food from accidental contamination from other foods during cooling.

STEP 3. Pack foods into freezer containers or freezer bags. Use “freezer” bags, not “storage” bags, for storing food in the freezer. Freezer bags are thicker than storage bags and will keep the food fresh longer.

You may wish to double-bag liquids as an added precaution against leakage.

STEP 4. Label foods. To avoid mystery meats and other foods of unknown age, label foods using freezer tape, gummed freezer labels or permanent marking pens/crayons. Include the name of the food, packaging date, number of servings or amount, and helpful hints (sliced, chopped) or special ingredients.

Place filled freezer bags on a flat surface in your freezer, such as on a metal pan. After they are frozen solid, remove the bags from the pan. Store and stack the bags right on the freezer shelf. Or turn them on their edge and store them vertically.

STEP 5. Thaw and cook frozen foods. DO NOT thaw perishable foods at room temperature. If these foods are left at room temperature too long, bacteria may grow and produce heat-resistant toxins that can cause food-borne illness. Cooking may not be able to destroy these toxins. It's best to plan ahead for slow, safe thawing in the refrigerator overnight. Up to 5 pounds of food should thaw in about 24 hours. Or food may be transferred from a freezer bag to a microwave safe container for thawing in the microwave.

Does regular exercise help protect against viruses?

Are you wondering if exercise helps your immune system protect you from catching cold and flu viruses? On one hand, it makes sense that exercising may provide added protection, given all that we know about its health benefits, like lowering risk for chronic diseases, reducing stress, improving sleep, etc.



The Truth Is...

We don't know for sure. But there is evidence to suggest there is a link between getting regular exercise and having a healthy immune system. Here's how a regular exercise habit may help keep your immune system in balance:

- Improves the ability of immune cells to circulate throughout the body which enhances immune activity. On the other hand, over-exercising may decrease immune capacity.
- Reduces inflammation when it is not otherwise needed to fight infections.
- Diversifies the kinds of healthy microorganisms found in your gut.
- Reduces the loss of immune function as we age.

The Bottom Line

Getting regular exercise helps strengthen your body, calms your mind, and helps build social connections when done with others. Boosting your immune system may be one more health benefit to add to the long list of reasons why being physical active is good for you.

Connecting with children *for wellness at home*

Are you and your kids going a little stir-crazy being stuck at home during the COVID-19 pandemic? Try to shift your perspective. Now is a good time to connect with family. Here are some healthy and productive ways to engage children.



Focus on Family Meals

Eating together as a family has many benefits. For one, parents can be role models for encouraging their kids to eat healthier foods.

Besides better nutrition, children of families who eat together are also less likely to have behavior problems, or use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they get older. Children also have better relationships with parents when gathering around a table to share mealtimes.

You can make family meals more fun by asking children to choose themes and menus. Besides the popular taco Tuesday, how about preparing a meal with only 2 colors of food, or having an indoor picnic? Get kids involved in planning and preparing family meals. Depending on their age and abilities, there are lots of things they can do to help out in the kitchen.

Here are some ideas:

- **3 – 5 years old:** Use a spoon to mix together simple ingredients, wash vegetables and fruit, tear greens for a salad, cut soft ingredients (think strawberries) using a strong plastic knife, spread peanut butter on bread, and press cookie cutters.
- **8 – 9 years old:** Find ingredients in the cupboard or fridge, make a salad, whisk eggs, microwave foods, juice citrus fruit, and open cans.
- **10 -12 years old:** Slice or chop vegetables, boil or steam vegetables, simmer ingredients on the stove, and follow a simple recipe.

Introduce these tasks gradually and give kids time to master each one. Supervise as needed.



Stay Active

Encourage physical activity to help keep moods up and bodies healthy.

- Play outside if you have a yard. Play tag, skip rope, shoot hoops, or throw around a football.
- Go for a family hike on a nature trail or a bike ride.
- Encourage your children to help with active outdoor chores, such as planting the garden and watering plants, pulling weeds, or feeding the birds. Doing chores as a family is more fun, especially if you can make a game of it.
- When indoors, play interactive video games, like tennis or bowling. Or, have a daily/weekly dance party.

Turning challenges into opportunities is not easy. But creating closer bonds with your family may be the silver lining that's needed to make coping easier for everyone.

8 *hard surfaces to clean to* help prevent coronavirus spread

Based on what we know about the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), cleaning of hard surfaces followed by disinfecting can help limit the spread of the virus in the household.



Difference between Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- **Cleaning** – Uses soap or detergents and water to remove, but not kill, germs and dirt from surfaces. It lowers the number of viruses which helps lower the risk of spreading infection.
- **Disinfecting** – Uses chemicals to kill germs on surfaces after cleaning to further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Here are 8 hard surfaces in your household to clean and disinfect regularly:



Light switches



Remote controls



Desks



Hard-backed chairs



Tables & countertops



Doorknobs and handles



Sinks and faucets



Toilets

For more guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting, including for households with someone in isolation because of suspected or confirmed COVID-19, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html.

What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Immune-Boosting Foods

In general, the foods that strengthen your immune system are the same foods you need to balance overall health: Vegetables and Fruit, Whole Grains, Beans and Lentils, and Nuts and Seeds. While no one food can totally prevent you from catching a virus like the coronavirus or flu, here are some foods and their key nutrients known to boost immunity:



Citrus Fruits & Tomatoes –
Vitamin C, beta carotene



Sweet Potato & Carrots –
Beta carotene



Beans & Lentils –Zinc,
protein



Nuts & Seeds –Anti-
inflammatory substances, zinc,
protein, selenium, vitamin E



Blueberries & Dried Tart
Cherries – Flavonoid
antioxidants.



Green Vegetables –
Antioxidants, vitamin C



Lean Animal Proteins
(salmon, chicken, dairy) –
Omega-3 fats, protein, zinc,
vitamin D



Turmeric & Cinnamon –
Anti-inflammatory substances