

HELPFUL TIPS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS



PLANNING AHEAD

- In addition to avoiding large crowds and limiting non-essential travel, come up with a *Family Emergency Preparedness Plan*. Start by programming in your entire 'inner circle' as a FAVORITE on your loved-one's phone. Include doctors, the hospital, the home care company, neighbors, and stores that deliver.
- Limit the number of face-to-face visitors. If someone comes over, don't be embarrassed to them to wash their hands and their cell phones.
- Clean out a separate living space just in case you need to manage a 14-day quarantine. Get gloves and masks in the house, if possible.
- Learn the art of on-line grocery shopping—most offer low-cost delivery. If you do go the grocery store, many have early hours for seniors to stop. Be intentional with your list; don't overbuy.
- Keep devices charged; make sure Wi-Fi is can support additional streaming and virtual visits, and make sure everyone's credentials are entered so your loved one can access streaming services.
- Buy an extra charger for each device so you don't have to move them from room to room (in case you are cohabitating with someone who has been affected).
- Make an 'emergency' plan for the family pet.
- Check out [Caregiver Action Network](#) Covid-19 Tips for family caregivers.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Check with your insurance to see how far in advance you can purchase medications; purchase extra if possible. See if your pharmacy delivers.
- Cancel in-person medical appointments that are not medically necessary.
- Go only to the emergency room in an emergency.
- Check out the telehealth policies of PCP and specialists. Is there a way see them virtually? How does your insurance cover these visits?
- Keep you and your loved-one's immune systems healthy: Drink water, rest, meditate, eat healthy and think positively.
- Stock up on Zinc lozenges. These lozenges have been proven to be effective in blocking most viruses from multiplying in your throat and nasopharynx.
- Carry a bottle of hand sanitizer, disposable gloves or whatever reduces your anxiety when you leave the house—no one cares if you wear gloves to the grocery store or hang your sanitizer from your key chain. A recipe for homemade hand sanitizer if you can't find it in the store:
 - 2/3 cup 91% rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol)
 - 1/3 cup aloe vera gel
 - Optional: 8-10 drops essential oil (such as tea tree, lavender, peppermint, grapefruit)

STAYING ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

- Practice the art of Facetime, Zoom and Skype. Plan regular ‘visits’ with everyone in the family. Make it intergenerational if possible!
- If you have access to technology, you can do almost anything, anywhere! Here are some free resources available to you:
 - Many libraries have books, movies, and magazines for free online. Boston Public Library has a range of services available on the website www.bpl.org, and you can sign up for a free library card online.
 - Audible just made hundreds of titles completely free. Find a list [here](#)
 - Museums around the world offer free virtual tours of their collections. Find a list of museums [here](#)
 - Check with your church or synagogue to see if they have offer online sermons or services.
- Download Netflix, Prime and other streaming apps. Make a list of your top 5 binge-worthy shows, movies, and podcasts. Keep (some of it) light!
- Make playlists—include music you can chill out or dance to while you are disinfecting!
- Dust off that Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit or Backgammon game you played as a kid.
- Buy a case of inexpensive playing cards that can be thrown out after one use.
- Get outside! Remember how great it feels to take a long walk versus being confined to a gym.
- Routine is important. Even if you have nowhere to go, get up, dressed and start your day. Create a routine that keeps you focused. At the end of the day, treat yourself to a visit with a friend a that you haven’t spoken with in AGES.

CONTINUED REMINDERS

Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face
- Don’t shake hands! Opt for a fist bump, slight bow, elbow bump. Be creative.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the middle of your elbow
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible

Ask Yourself Every Day

- Have you been in close contact with anyone who:
 - Has been diagnosed with Coronavirus?
 - Is currently being investigated for, and/or awaiting test results for Coronavirus?
- Are you experiencing any of the symptoms of Coronavirus?
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath