

Healthcare Worker Wellness Tips

Maintaining physical and mental health during COVID-19

GENERAL TIPS

Take care of basic needs and employ helpful coping strategies.

Ensure rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engage in physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends.

Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

Healthy ways to manage stress are essential. Consider talking to someone you trust, exercising, meditating or journaling. Take a break from the news and focus your mind on what you are grateful for.

Stay home if you are sick.

The CDC recommends that people who are experiencing respiratory illness stay home until they are free of fever and other symptoms, such as frequent and severe coughing, for at least 24 hours without the use of medicines, such as aspirin and cough suppressants.

ANXIETY AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories (including social media).

Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting, leading to additional stress.

Take care of your body.

Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals; exercise regularly; get plenty of sleep; and avoid alcohol and drugs.

Stay connected and maintain your social networks.

Even in situations of isolation, try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via e-mail, social media, video conference and telephone.

Regular exercise is an effective stress management tool.

Maintaining or improving your fitness level can not only help relieve stress, but it can reduce the risk of viral infection and even the chances of severe COVID-19 complications. Low-intensity physical activities, such as walking, are helpful, especially for elderly and those with existing chronic conditions. If you can, try to achieve the recommended goal of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

IMMUNE SUPPORT

Maintain good sleep hygiene.

Poor sleep drags the immune system down, and affects your brain and the way you interact.

Practice social distancing.

When not at work, avoid large gatherings of more than 10 people and practice social distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet between yourself and others.

Practice good hand hygiene.

Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap. If soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Disinfect high-contact surfaces.

Clean/disinfect keyboards, cell phones, door handles, keys and other high-touch areas often.

Avoid open-served food.

Avoid eating food from places such as buffet lines or other self-serve food options.

AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

Stay informed by accessing information from reliable sources. Refrain from relying on social media for COVID-19 updates.

The latest information can be found on NM Interactive and nm.org/covid-19. Statistics, tips and work plans are updated regularly as understanding of the virus and its spread evolves.

Review and understand your health benefits offered through Northwestern Medicine.

From health insurance to child care and the Employee Assistance Program, resources are available to support you and your family. Go to MyNM Service Center on NMI to review your benefits.

VIRTUAL RESOURCES

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Confidential, flexible and virtual/telephonic resources for stress reduction strategies and other counseling needs are available 24/7 through the EAP. The program also offers family support, such as navigating child and elder care, as well as financial and legal advice. [Click here for more information.](#)

Hotel discounts

Northwestern Medicine has negotiated discounted rates for hotels in all regions. [Click here for more information.](#)

Child care assistance

In partnership with the City of Chicago, Sittercity is providing free access to Sittercity Premium as part of its Chicago Responds program. [Click here to sign up.](#)

Virtual tutoring for children

Scholastic Learn at Home offers free at-home learning guides for Pre-K and Kindergarten students. [Click here to access guides.](#)

Free laundry services

CD One Price Cleaners is offering free wash and fold services **with valid ID** (limit 20 pounds per week) through April. [Click here to find a location near you.](#)

Wellness resources

- **Online courses:** Yale University is offering a free course that teaches you how to be happier.
 - The Science of Well-Being: [Click here to enroll for free.](#)
- **Video resources:** Understanding Normal Reactions to a Crisis from OHSU Knight Cancer Institute.
 - Caring for Yourself and Others: [Click here for link to video.](#)

Yoga classes

- [CorePower On-Demand](#)
- [YogaWorks](#)
- [Down Dog](#)

Virtual workouts

- [7-minutes workout app](#)
- [Peloton app](#)

Guided meditation

- [Ten Percent Happier app](#)
- [Calm app](#)

Questions about the virus and the response at Northwestern Medicine can be directed to covid-19@nm.org, or call 312.47.COVID.

Thank you for your service to our community and your dedication to patients.