A cancer diagnosis often affects the emotional health of patients, families and caregivers. The current coronavirus outbreak may add even more worry for people with cancer as they try to stay healthy, find and keep up with changing information, and adjust to new work, school, and family routines.

While it’s very important that cancer patients take steps to lower their exposure to coronavirus, they need to take care of their emotional and mental well-being, too.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines well-being as thinking positively, feeling good, and being satisfied with life even though this can feel different for everyone. According to the CDC, higher levels of well-being are linked to a lower risk of disease, illness, and injury, speedier recovery, and a better-functioning immune system.

Feelings and reactions can change frequently in troubling times, and staying positive can help protect your overall health. There are things you can do to help deal with
stressful situations and have a good sense of well-being, even if you’re stuck at home. Here are some tips from the National Institutes of Health’s Emotional Wellness Toolkit:\(^3\):

- Spend time with family and friends. While you are social-distancing, this may mean more texts and phone calls, experimenting with video calling, sending an email or e-card, or joining online support groups.
- Keep a good outlook, develop healthy habits, and focus on the positive experiences in your life.
- Go outside when you can, get regular physical activity\(^4\), and eat a healthy diet\(^5\).
- Get plenty of sleep, and try out books, websites, apps, and videos that can help you relax.
- Find ways that help you laugh, like talking with other upbeat people, playing games, and watching movies.
- Do things you’ve been wanting to do at home, like de-cluttering, trying new recipes, or reorganizing cupboards and closets.
- Focus on your spiritual side by reading, participating in online discussions, or communing with nature, journaling, meditating, or creating art.

If you feel like you aren’t able to get or stay happy, you may benefit from professional help. Don't hesitate to talk to your cancer care team when you're feeling stress that's hard to handle. Remember that every person is different, and your cancer care team can help you find the best action to take based on your own situation. Support and help are available, including medicines, counseling\(^6\), or a combination.

The American Cancer Society is here for you. Call us at 1-800-227-2345\(^7\) if you need help.

**Hyperlinks**


Reviewed by

The American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team (www.cancer.org/cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html)

Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as journalists, editors, and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

Helpful Resources


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