

## TIPS FOR COPING WHEN QUARANTINED WITH COVID-19 FAMILY MEMBERS

Individuals with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 are generally required to remain quarantined at home. Their family members take on the important role of caring for them, including providing supportive treatments, monitoring for worsening of their condition, preventing the spread of the disease, and at times determining when to end isolation. Family

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members may feel ill-equipped to properly care for their loved one. In addition, families may be stigmatized for having a member diagnosed with the disease. These responsibilities, the concern about becoming infected, and uncertainty about the patient's recovery may result in elevated distress. Below are strategies to help families cope with these challenges.

### Easing Family Distress

- Remember that distress is an understandable reaction in such circumstances.
- Remind family members that their loved one's symptoms are not severe and they are more likely to improve than worsen.
- Engage in healthy behaviors that promote wellness.
  - » Maintain a healthy diet, obtain sufficient sleep when possible, and practice relaxation techniques.
  - » Ensure physical resilience by avoiding excessive alcohol, smoking, and vaping.
- Maintain routines related to bedtimes, meals, and exercise.
- Doing something "concrete" to address the situation can be helpful. Work together as a family to ensure sufficient resources (e.g., drinking water, non-perishable food, money, over-the-counter medication, and first-aid supplies).
  - » Consider contactless home-delivery services for groceries and supplies.
  - » Arrange for support from neighbors and community members.

Manage as best you can considering the circumstances, your resources, and the available information. There isn't a "right way" to manage in these circumstances. Do what works for you and your family.

### Helping Families Feel Safe

- Obtain information and recommendations from reliable resources such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO).
  - » Maintain contact with your family's health care team and keep them updated on your family member's progress.
  - » Be aware of the warning signs of worsening symptoms that require immediate medical consultation (e.g., difficulty breathing, chest pain, dizziness, difficulty arousing, and bluish lips or face).
- Although specific guidance may not be provided for every situation, it can be useful to develop family habits and procedures to help family members feel safe in managing exposures.
  - » Basic hygiene practices must be followed by all family members (e.g., regularly wash hands, cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing, avoid contact with face, and frequently clean commonly touched surfaces and door knobs).
  - » Consider additional precautions (e.g., delivering items on a tray, wearing masks and gloves).
  - » Promote hygiene and safety practices for children in a child-friendly manner (e.g., singing songs, creating games).
- Limit interactions with high-risk individuals (e.g., elderly, immunosuppressed).

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- Work together to decide living arrangements (e.g., separate bedroom or bathroom use for COVID-19 ill family member) that are practical and support family safety.

### Reducing Stigmatization

- Confirm with your health care provider when your loved one and other family members are no longer at risk of spreading the virus.
- After all family members are cleared by healthcare providers, share this information with friends, neighbors, community members, and extended family, so they understand the family is no longer at risk of spreading the virus.

### Helping Children

- Help children understand what is happening within their family by talking with them and including them in family routines and age appropriate basic hygiene practices.
- Consider each child's age and developmental level when deciding the amount and nature of the information to share with them.

- Remind children that their family member will likely recover.
- Promote children's sense of purpose by providing opportunities to contribute within the home (e.g., helping with food preparation, cleaning the dishes, and other family chores).

For specific information about communicating with children about COVID-19 see Additional Resources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

### Additional Resources

*Discussing Coronavirus with Your Children* fact sheet

[https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS\\_FS\\_Discussing\\_Coronavirus\\_w\\_Your\\_Children.pdf](https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS_FS_Discussing_Coronavirus_w_Your_Children.pdf)

*Finding the Right Words to Talk with Children and Teens about Coronavirus* fact sheet

[https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS\\_FS\\_Finding\\_Right\\_Words\\_Talk\\_Children\\_Teens\\_Coronavirus.pdf](https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS_FS_Finding_Right_Words_Talk_Children_Teens_Coronavirus.pdf)