# How to reduce stress during COVID-19 pandemic

The emergency of the new COVID-19 pandemic can put a lot of stress on everyone. Fear and anxiety can make you more vulnerable and may cause strong emotions in children and adults.

## People who might exhibit stronger emotions are:

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19.
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders.
- Children and teens.
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.

## How to know you are exhibiting stronger emotions facing the pandemic?

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

## People with mental health:

In addition to what is stated above, people with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.

## Things you can do to cope with stress:

- Check the facts and the source of the news so you know the real risk behind the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Take the right precautionary measures as advised by international organizations.
- Reduce the amount of time you spend watching, reading or listening to news, including social media.
- Take care of your body: meditate, eat healthy food, sleep well, hydrate.
- Practice an activity you enjoy: dancing, singing, drawing...
- Connect with others virtually and share how are you feeling.

## For people who have been released from quarantine:

Being separated from others can be stressful, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine. Some feelings include :

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.

**Adapted from:** How to manage stress, Center of Disease Control and Prevention, March 2020.
Manage Anxiety & Stress, Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, March 2020