



# The Caring Connection

Caring Companions  
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**A Resource Guide for Your  
Loved Ones & Those Who  
Provide Care.**

Edition 3, Volume 3

July – September 2020

## 2020 Calendar:

### July

Independence Day July 4

Juvenile Arthritis  
Awareness Month

UV Safety Month

### August

National Psoriasis  
Awareness Month

National Immunization  
Awareness Month

### September

Labor Day September 7th

World Alzheimer's Month &  
World Alzheimer's Day  
September 21st

Grandparents' Day  
September 13th

Healthy Aging Month



*Centers for Disease Control and  
Protection: Older adults and people  
who have severe underlying medical  
conditions like heart or lung disease  
or diabetes seem to be at higher risk  
for developing more serious  
complications from COVID-19  
illness.*

#### Steps to reduce risk of getting sick

There are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting sick.

- **Stay home if possible.**
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol** especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others** (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths).
- **Keep away from** people who are sick.
- **Stock up on supplies.**
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched services.
- **Avoid all cruise travel** and non-essential air travel.
- **Everyone should wear a cloth face cover** when they have to go out in public, for example to the

grocery store or to pick up other necessities.

- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- **Call your healthcare professional if you have concerns** about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

#### Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
  - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
  - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing

FOR OLDER ADULTS IN NEED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
(lack of transportation, mobility issues, illness, have a disability or quarantined)

# Grab&Go

A Meal Distribution Service for Older Adults

Each seven-pack box includes seven different individual entrees, seven cartons of milk, and a variety of fruit cups, apple sauce and bread products.

PICK-UP LOCATION —  
**Ellicott City 50+ Center**  
 9401 Frederick Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042  
 Every Thursday • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

REGISTER TODAY  
**LIMITED AVAILABILITY!**

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED —  
 To register, contact Maryland Access Point of Howard County  
 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) • map@howardcountymd.gov

Order must be received by 12:00 noon on Monday to receive a meal kit for the following week. Eligible individuals must be 60 years and older; spouses of any age are welcome to participate. Program funding made possible through the Senior Nutrition Program of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

SUGGESTED DONATION —  
 \$47.32 per SEVEN-PACK MEAL KIT (6.76/wk)  
 Donations ensure the continued viability of the program; a donation envelope is provided with each kit.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH —

Howard County Office on Aging and Independence  
 Department of Community Resources and Services  
 www.howardcountymd.gov/aging  
 Facebook.com/TheCoCommunity

The ROVING RADISH  
 Neighbor Ride  
 Volunteers Drive - Seniors Thrive

If you need this information in an alternate format, contact Maryland Access Point of Howard County at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay).

## Monitor Your Health

- **Be alert for symptoms.** Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- **Take your temperature** if symptoms develop.
  - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

## Stress & coping

You may feel increased stress during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Watch for fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Watch for symptoms.

## Develop a care plan

A care plan summarizes your health conditions, medications, healthcare providers,

emergency contacts, and end-of-life care options (for example, advance directives). Complete your care plan in consultation with your doctor, and if needed, with help from a family member or home nurse aide.

A care plan can have benefits beyond the current pandemic. You can update your care plan every year, or any time you have a change in your health or medications. Care plans can help reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations, and improve overall medical management for people with a chronic health condition, resulting in better quality of life.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, having a care plan is an important part of emergency preparedness.

## Senior living facilities

People with loved ones in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other types of senior living facilities may be understandably concerned about their loved one's risk of illness from COVID-19.

To protect these vulnerable friends and family members, CDC has advised that long-term care facilities

- Restrict visitors
- Regularly check healthcare workers and residents for fevers and symptoms
- Limit activities within the facility to keep residents safe

## Older adults are at higher risk

**8 out of 10 deaths** reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years old and older.



<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/index.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/>



[https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cib\\_mental\\_health.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cib_mental_health.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/>



## Garden Therapy for Both Seniors & Caregivers

If you're a caregiver, there's an informative study in the resource section below which looks at the evidence to support the use of therapeutic gardens for the elderly and the benefits of gardening as therapy for seniors, and those with dementia.

*This literature review presents the data supporting future studies of the effects of natural settings for the long term care and rehabilitation of the elderly having the medical and mental health problems frequently occurring with aging.*

Here are just some of the therapeutic benefits for seniors and gardening in this review, or even simply living in a nature immersed environment: (Caregivers, these are benefits for us as well!)

- improves memory, attention, sense of responsibility and social interaction
- reduces stress and increases feelings of calm and relaxation
- fosters a sense of accomplishment
- improves self-esteem
- improves sense of independence
- promotes movement and cardiovascular exercise
- provides involvement of the senses and tactile sensations

- provides fresh air and sunshine, a daily dose of Vitamin D
- provides a soothing and peaceful place to sit and walk and enjoy either solitude or social interaction
- improves mood and quality of life
- can reduce the perception of pain
- reduces fatigue and anxiety
- promotes healing and healthy immune system
- reduces tension, agitation and disruptive behaviors in the dementia patient
- the number of falls decreased with high garden users, as well as decreased the need for high dose anti-psychotic medications

For those with dementia, it's critical that any garden the patient is exposed to consist completely of non-toxic, edible plants, and all garden paths must circle back to the entrance so the patient cannot get lost or wander off. It is wonderfully therapeutic for those seniors who still enjoy gardening to ideally have wheel chair access to raised garden beds where they can continue to garden with minimal help.

## How to help seniors and loved ones cope with stress over COVID-19 Coronavirus.

March 16th, 2020 | [COVID-19 Helpful Information](#)

Now that the World Health Organization has classified the new coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a pandemic (worldwide exposure), rumors and panicky misinterpretation of the facts tend to intensify. When these reach the ears of older adults, the reaction can be exaggerated. Especially for seniors with cognitive decline or dementia, a state of quarantine or "social distancing" can aggravate anxiety, anger, distress and isolation. You can help your older loved one cope with the stress and see this through if you, your family and friends follow a few simple pieces of advice.

**Keep the news updates to a minimum.** Avoid the steady diet of media that would make any usually calm person anxious or fearful. Check reliable news sources once or twice a day. Then, take comfort in the fact that now you know about the hazards of the disease and you're doing all you can to protect your loved ones and yourself.

**Get the facts.** Look to established health authorities and the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) or the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#), from which the advice in this article was drawn. Visiting two or three of these comprehensive and credible sources will answer all of your questions and confirm that you're getting the right information.

**Keep it simple and clear.** When you share facts about what's going on and how to reduce the risk of infection, use words that older people with or without cognitive impairment can understand. "There's a virus going around. We're being extra careful." It's respectful, truthful, and would be a good introduction to any practice you have to explain, such as more frequent handwashing and housecleaning, and explaining why group activities have been "postponed" (rather than "cancelled"). When you find a newspaper or online article with pictures that does a good job of explaining, save it. This can be calming and informative at the same time.

**Watch your language.** The words "epidemic" and "pandemic" are accurate, but to the fearful, highly sensational. Keep it personal. What's going on inside your house is not an epidemic. "We're staying inside because there's a lot of it going around." Enough said. Don't refer to people with the disease as "cases" or "victims." They're "people who have COVID-19" or "people recovering from this coronavirus."

**Stay calm, protect yourself and help other people.** First, be a good role model for others, regardless of their age. If you project an attitude of calm, rational caution, this will restore your own sense of control and ease the anxiety of those around you. Don't pretend that COVID-19 is not serious, just say that your chances of exposure are at a minimum when you follow precautions.

**Repeat positive stories** to counteract the rumor mill. Well-meaning friends are easy to listen to and are often "full of facts" that don't portray the actual situation and can encourage dangerous behavior. There are plenty of stories of people like your loved one who have recovered from a coronavirus encounter. They testify to the validity of trusting the health authorities and relying on the support of loved ones.

**Engage family and friends** to inform and help them practice prevention. Encourage peers, especially knowledgeable older adults and retired medical professionals, to volunteer in neighbor-checking and providing childcare for medical personnel restricted to facilities fighting COVID-19. Build a sense of community and a network of outreach. It's rewarding and effective.

Residents of senior living communities should be comforted by the fact that they're surrounded by health care professionals and that cleanliness and the best practices in maintaining sanitary conditions are already routine throughout their environment.



Stress? Uncertainty? Grief? Anger? We understand.

While these are perfectly normal reactions to a pandemic, distressing thoughts and emotions can cause problems with our health, relationships, moods and behaviors. These days we really need to be mindful of our minds, understand the brain-behavior relationship and take steps to protect our mental and emotional well-being. Our goal should be to thrive, not just survive, during this pandemic. It is something we can do together.

The Mental Health Association of Maryland's Older Adults: Vibrant Minds program is pleased to offer "Mind Your Mind Mondays," a weekly opportunity for older Marylanders to learn about mental health and engage with others around mental wellness.

**When:** Monday evenings from 6:30pm to 7:15pm

**Registration:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Kryow8s5e-VW8jRLUzw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Kryow8s5e-VW8jRLUzw)

You only need to register once. After you register, Zoom will send you a link that you can use to join us every week.

