



I'm stressed and worried about my health. What can I do?



The pandemic has caused a lot of stress and uncertainty for everyone, but not everyone experiences it in the same way. You may be worried about your own health, the health of loved ones, or about family, work or friendships. If you have been working from home or live alone, it's easy to feel isolated.

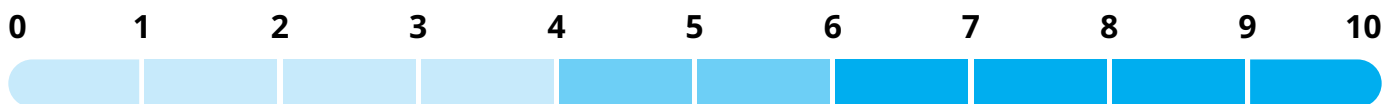
You may feel unsure about how to keep yourself and others safe while also wanting to "return to normal". It may be difficult or upsetting if your views about safety and health are different from the views of family members or friends.



Anxiety and low mood can be different for every person. They can include:

- » Feeling scared, worried or sad.
- » Losing your appetite OR trying to comfort yourself with too much food or alcohol.
- » Having low energy OR feeling restless, irritable and preoccupied.
- » Having trouble concentrating.

Ask yourself: "On a scale of 0 to 10, what is my level of distress?" Distress includes sadness and/or anxiety.



MILD

If your level of distress is mild (0 to 4), practice self-help activities such as breathing exercises, yoga, listening to music, talking with a friend or taking a walk in nature if that is possible.

MODERATE

If your level of distress is moderate (5 to 6), turn to online resources (see page 3) for help.

SEVERE

If your level of distress is severe (7 to 10), reach out to your family doctor or trusted healthcare provider. They can help you decide the best course of action. If you are worried that you might hurt yourself, call 911 or go to the emergency department.

Regardless of how distressed you feel, try to:

- » Be kind to yourself and remember that it is natural to feel some anxiety and fear during a pandemic.
- » Keep a daily routine, including proper sleep, nutritious and mindful eating, physical movement and connection with those you love.
- » Try not to fixate on things you cannot control. For some people, this may be easier to do if you limit how much COVID-related content you see. Consider checking updates once a day. Ensure you are getting COVID information from a source you can trust that provides accurate and easy-to-understand information.
- » If you have questions, ask a trusted healthcare provider. They can help you sort out what is factual and what is not.
- » At least once a day, try to take a break to listen to music, read a book, go for a walk, or connect with others.
- » Limit how much you drink alcohol and use substances, especially when you are alone.
- » Avoid using sleeping pills regularly or more often than prescribed.

When to seek urgent help from your family doctor

- » If you have been feeling overwhelmed for more than a few days and things aren't getting better.
- » If your stress/anxiety/panic is unbearable and you can't function, eat or sleep.
- » If you are using substances or drinking alcohol and losing control of how much you are using.

If you are worried that you might hurt yourself, are having withdrawal symptoms from alcohol or drugs, or have taken an overdose, call 911 or go to the emergency department.



If you have thoughts or plans to die by suicide, contact the Canada Suicide Prevention Service by calling **1-833-456-4566 or texting **45645**.**

Phone lines are open 24 hours, 7 days a week, with text support available 4pm to midnight ET. French phone support is available to any French speaker outside Quebec (8am to midnight ET).

Useful resources to support your mental health

Wellness Together Canada has many self-help resources and also provides time-limited, free, one-on-one counseling ca.portal.gs.

Connex Ontario can help you find mental health and addiction support services in Ontario. Call 1-866-531-2600, text 247247, or visit connexontario.ca/en-ca/our-services.

Anxiety Canada offers practical tips and resources on how to cope with COVID worries. Visit <https://www.anxietycanada.com/covid-19/> or download the app MindShift CBT.

Kids Help Phone has resources for children and youth as well as crisis services available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Visit <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>.

For more mental health and addiction resources, visit:

- » <https://www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/tools-resources/covid-19-resources/community-supports-special-populations/ocfp-mh-patient-resources.pdf>
- » <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19>