

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Tips to help older adults during a quarantine

Older adults are at higher risk for serious illness from the Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19. If you and your household are under quarantine — whether self-quarantine or otherwise — here are some tips for caregivers to help support older adults during this time.

1. **Understand medications and medical supplies.** Make sure you know about all prescription and/or over-the-counter medications and medical supplies, such as diabetes test strips and oxygen, your loved one needs. See if it's possible to have extra medication and supplies available. The recommendation is to have a two-week supply on hand, if possible. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist to learn how you can obtain what you need.
2. **Create a plan for food and other supplies.** Take stock of food in your household as well as additional necessities, such as toilet paper, pet food, and forms of entertainment such as books or magazines. Establish who will arrange food or supply delivery, if need be, including prepared meals. Know how much is needed. Create a back-up plan.
3. **Understand protocol for care facilities.** If your loved one is in a care facility, make sure you understand protocols for visitations, communication, infection control and the provision of medical care.
4. **Stay connected.** Establish how you'll communicate with your loved one. Set a regular time of day to call and check in. Consider several methods of staying connected, such as phone calls, text messaging, email, social media and/or or face-to-face computer time. Cards or letters by mail may also help an older adult stay engaged.
5. **Make a list of emergency contacts.** Have a list of phone numbers of family, friends, neighbors, health care providers, the local health department and other community organizations. Post the list in a central location in your household, for example, on a refrigerator. Make sure your loved one has also has this listed posted with easy access.
6. **Know about community resources.** If your loved one depends on community support and services (for example, an organization that delivers meals), make sure their needs are being met. Know who to contact for additional resources.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Get your home ready. Accessed: 3/18/20. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

National Institute of Health: How to Prepare. Accessed: 3/18/20. <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

World Health Organization: Tip Sheet "Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak." Accessed: 3/18/20. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_8

This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. This program and its components may not be available in all states and coverage exclusions may apply.