



# DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

## Managing Chronic Conditions During COVID

### HOW TO STAY ON TOP OF YOUR HEALTH DURING A CRISIS

Managing chronic conditions like diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and stress was challenging enough pre-pandemic. With the emergence of COVID-19, however, the normal, healthcare routine quickly fell to the wayside. Effectively addressing and managing such conditions entails daily diligence and on-going communication with healthcare providers. Now, regular check-ups are not as easy to schedule. Additionally, there is a fear of going to a doctor's office or picking up medications because you could contract the virus.

Thankfully, there are tools and strategies to help those with chronic medical conditions maintain their health, even during difficult times like these. Staying on top of any chronic condition is critical, as managing these conditions help lower your risk for complications and other diseases.

#### 4 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING CHRONIC CONDITIONS

1. Keep in touch with your healthcare providers. Your regular visits and check-ups probably fell off your calendar or was postponed when the pandemic hit in early 2020. If this is the case, you need to pick these appointments back up immediately. Regular communication and visits with your healthcare
2. Focus on nutrition and safely participate in physical activity as much as possible. Taking an active role in your own care is an effective way to fight off a variety of health problems and diseases. Whether it's a nutrition plan or exercise routine, both will go a long way in supporting an overall healthy life. For example, people with diabetes should follow a healthy eating plan prescribed for blood sugar control. It's always important to speak with your healthcare provider about implementing physical activity and eating routines.
3. Identify and routinely practice relaxation techniques. Coping with uncertainty is stressful at any age, but people dealing with chronic health



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

provider are critical to adapting and maintaining your disease management plans. Many providers now phone and video appointments for safety and convenience.

conditions are more susceptible to illness when normal routines and healthcare are disrupted. Research relaxation strategies or consider effective stress relievers that worked for you in the past. A few recommendations include: getting enough rest and finding respite time during work or between shifts, physical activity, and staying in contact (with appropriate social distancing) with family and friends.

4. Depression and anxiety are common as a result of coping with a chronic illness and it can get in the way of managing the condition. Ask for help if you feel down or need help managing stress.
5. Don't rely on the Internet for treatment and self-diagnosis. Everyone is spending more time on their devices and on the web since the pandemic began. Although there is a lot of great health information online, it should never take the place of professional health evaluations, diagnosis, and treatment—information on the Internet is not a substitution!
6. Managing chronic health conditions isn't easy and the complexities of the current pandemic have only presented more challenges. Fortunately, with a little focus and diligence you can stay on top of your health and effectively manage any chronic condition—even in the worst of times.



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#### PLAN FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Preparing for the unexpected will help you manage a chronic health condition during a crisis. It's recommended to have certain things on hand if or when the unexpected occurs. Here are some items to consider:

- » At least one week's worth of medical supplies and equipment
- » Contact information for healthcare providers and emergency contacts
- » A medication list with doses and dosing schedules
- » A list of your allergies
- » Information about any medical devices you use
- » At least a three-day supply of any foods needed to manage your condition
- » Copies of your insurance card and photo ID