



What to Do and What Not to Do When There is an Epidemic or a Threat of an Epidemic



When the Coronavirus outbreak rapidly escalated to global pandemic status in the first half of 2020, we were faced (many of us, for the first time) with some difficult choices about how to safely and productively navigate our way through life during what was, for all intents and purposes, an emergency situation.

Pandemics, epidemics and disease outbreaks not only influence our physical and mental well-being but they can also have an immediate and long-term impact on supplies, services, public infrastructure and health care systems.

Below are some tips to help you know what to DO and what NOT to do during such times, along with some resources you can use to stay informed as best as possible.



DO

- Plan ahead. Make sure your whole family understands what is required to stay healthy, informed and connected.
- Collect relevant information from a trusted source (National Health Service, World Health Organization, etc.)
- Stay up to date and stay calm.
- Make sure you have enough food, water and medical supplies (including prescriptions) to last for a few days in case you are unable to leave the house. It is an emergency kit of sorts.
- Create a list of important phone numbers and contact details (family, friends, family GP, schools, emergency services, etc.)
- Be community minded. Check (safely) on others who may need help. Resilient, connected communities are vital in a public health emergency.
- Take care of yourself. Try to get the appropriate amount of nutrition, exercise, and rest.



DON'T

- Panic.
- Touch your face unless you have clean hands and have not touched common surfaces.
- Engage in unnecessary social contact outside of your household.
- Drink from someone else's drink or eat food someone already bitten into.
- Believe every social media story/rumour/update.
- Become addicted to the 24/7 news cycle.



The final two points are very important. As a crisis unfolds, you may rely heavily on media and social media outlets for up-to-date information. However, such constant exposure to the distressing details of an emergency or crisis can have a damaging psychological effect. If the media outlets you access are more prone to hyperbole and sensationalism, you run the risk of compounding your fears and concerns. Try to be aware of the media's potential impact on your mood and mental health.



In summary, during a pandemic/epidemic of any kind, do not panic, get the facts, plan, and make good health choices. The websites below are good resources.

- **Pandemic/Epidemic Resources**
- **National Health Service (NHS)**
- **Department of Health and Social Care**
- **Local/regional NHS**
 - If you do not know how to locate your local health department, the CDC has a search function that will get you to your state's Department of Health website

* For more information on how to build an emergency kit, refer to the National Health Service (NHS) website.



Critical support when you need it

Visit optumeap.com/criticalsupportcenter for additional critical support resources and information.



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