

Finding coronavirus media coverage overwhelming?

When an outbreak such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) happens, it's tempting to immerse yourself in round-the-clock coverage. News about the virus's impact may make you feel helpless and afraid. How do you stay informed without feeling overwhelmed by anxiety?

Look for overexposure

Here are some signs that worry about COVID-19 is getting to be too much:

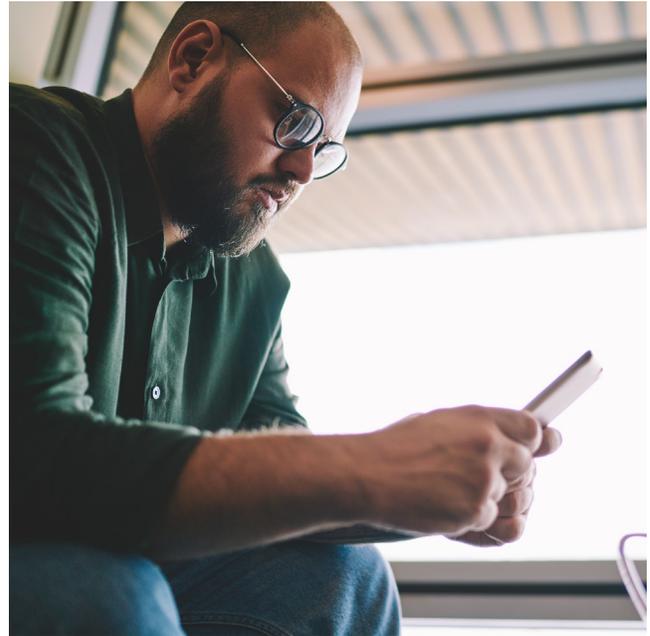
- Thinking about the virus all the time
- Getting upset about what will happen
- Having trouble keeping up with daily tasks
- Snapping at loved ones
- Getting more tired than usual but can't sleep

Too much media exposure can be overpowering. Take a step back and make changes to help you and your family manage your anxiety about the virus.

Take care of yourself

How you or your loved ones respond to COVID-19 news is key. Here are some tips:

- **Learn about the virus.** Look for trusted healthcare sources for information (the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, Mayo Clinic, etc.), and stick with only one or two of them to get updates. Limit the number of times each week that you check in.
- **Keep on task.** Try to read or listen to the news when it's not in the way of your daily routine. Skip catching up on the media update right before bed.
- **Talk with a trusted peer.** Family members or friends may make you feel less alone in your concerns. Even if you don't see eye-to-eye, listen to what they have to say and why.
- **Check in with your loved ones** to make sure they are coping well with concerns about the virus.



- **Help others and be a role model (from afar).** Call people. Smile and wave from a safe distance. Work from home to help others in need (for example, help an elderly person pay bills online).

Take care of your kids

Kids are curious by nature and will ask about distressing news. Don't brush the topic off or make it taboo.

- **Learn what you can about COVID-19 so you feel comfortable talking about it.** This will help you put it in perspective for them.
- **Talk about plans that are in place to help keep everyone safe.** Let them know the steps you are taking as a family to stay healthy, as well as what governments are doing to help prevent the virus's spread.
- **Be a good role model.** Your children will look to you to decide if their fears are grounded. Model good hygiene, reasonable precautions, and a calm attitude.

Use your resources

For immediate crisis counseling for emotional distress related to the virus, contact the [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/2k19) 24/7 at 800-985-5990. You may also call your company's employee assistance program, which specializes in addressing mental health and other life challenges.