

# COVID-19: FAST Tips on Managing Anxiety

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**F**ocus on what you can control

**A**void unreliable information

**S**eek support

**T**ake a breath

## Focus on What You Can Control:

Anxiety, particularly about uncertainty, is a normal part of life. But sometimes our anxious minds may cause us to feel alarmed or panicked and we then may feel more endangered than we actually are and underestimate our ability to manage the thing we are worried about. **Remind yourself:** There are a number of things you can do to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. These community and self-care measures include staying home if you are sick, frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, getting enough sleep, and managing stress. If you are at higher-risk of serious illness, you should take special precautions. Limit travel and do not attend large gatherings unless it is essential. See CDPH's [Guidance for Individuals and Households](#), as well as our [Guidance for People at Higher Risk](#).

## Avoid Unreliable Information:

Sometimes when we are nervous or uncertain, we may find ourselves repeatedly checking the news, going into a “Google spiral,” or getting information from questionable sources. While we may be tempted to do this, it often fuels panicky feelings and actually doesn't help us to feel better. Try to set a self-care limit for yourself of only checking the news once or twice a day and only going to reliable information sources such as [chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://chicago.gov/coronavirus) (CDPH) or [cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus) (CDC).

## Seek Support:

Often when we are anxious we may feel a tendency to isolate. Relationships with others gives us a sense of perspective, reminds us that we are not alone in the world, and helps to support our mood. Remind yourself to reach out to friends, loved ones, neighbors, a clergy person, therapist, or other supportive person on a regular basis. Feeling connected to another person will help you to feel more balanced. If you need to be isolated—for instance because you are sick—keep connecting via phone or video chat.

## Take a Breath:

Intentional deep breathing helps to restore balance and clear the mind of panic and worry. During your day, remind yourself to slow down, inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat this breathing exercise for a few minutes throughout the day as you need it. There is a variety of phone apps (Calm, Headspace) and YouTube videos (use general search terms such as 'muscle relaxation exercise' or 'deep breathing exercise') that are useful meditation and relaxation aids.