

PA HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE TO FITNESS & WELL-BEING



COVID-19

SPECIAL EDITION, SPRING 2020

STAYING
CONNECTED
WHILE
STAYING
APART

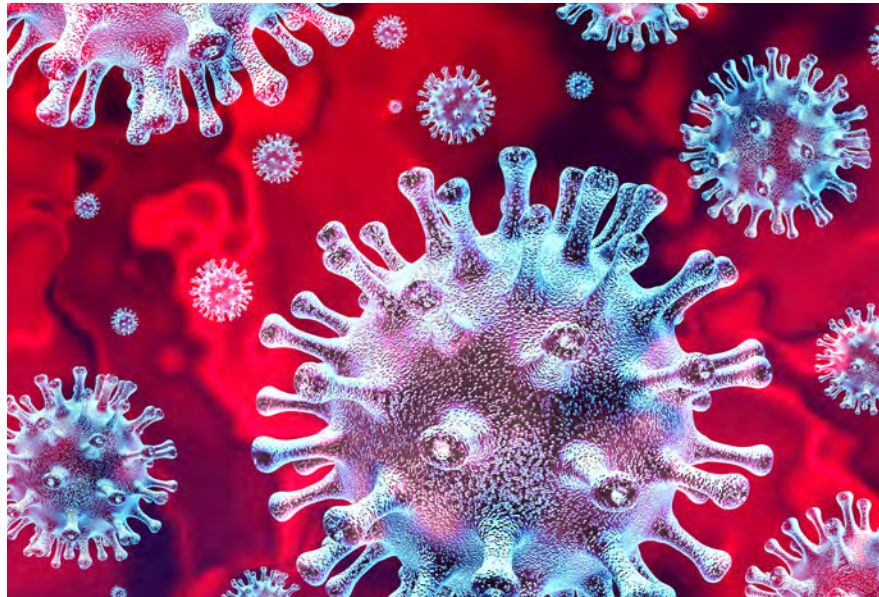


SHELTERING AT
HOME WITH TEENS,
SELF-CARE TIPS
AND MORE

Find us online at
[geisinger.org/PAHealth](https://www.geisinger.org/PAHealth).

WELCOME

Information is evolving rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic. All content was accurate at the time of publication.



We created *PA Health* magazine as part of Geisinger's mission to help you stay healthy by showcasing local resources for outdoor activities, recipes for healthy foods and inspiring stories about health challenges your neighbors have overcome. That mission is more important than ever before as we join together to combat a health challenge that impacts us all — COVID-19.

This special edition of *PA Health* is designed to direct you to the resources and information you need to stay safe, protect your friends and families and get through this difficult time so we can all enjoy the better times that lie ahead.

Geisinger has been a trusted health partner in our communities for more than 100 years. Turn to us now whenever you have questions about COVID-19.

You can start at our online hub, [geisinger.org/coronavirus](https://www.geisinger.org/coronavirus). And if you need to talk directly to

a nurse, we've opened a 24/7 hotline. Call us at **570-284-3657**.

I hope you'll also take a few minutes to read about simple steps you can take to stop the spread of COVID-19, how you can help your kids understand (and thrive during) physical distancing and the importance of self-care right now. We're also sharing some truly inspiring stories about how our neighbors are rising to the occasion to protect our communities.

Thank you for all you're doing to combat the pandemic and keep our friends and neighbors healthy. We are truly all in this together.

Yours in good health,



Jaewon Ryu, MD, JD, Geisinger President and Chief Executive Officer

On the cover:

Technology is enabling many of us to work from home and maintain healthy social connections during the pandemic.

PA HEALTH
M a g a z i n e

COVID-19
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**YOU'RE NOT
FEELING WELL.
WHAT DO
YOU DO?**

If you have
questions
about
COVID-19,
a nurse is
just a phone
call away. 24/7.

570-284-3657

#LongLiveHeroes:

Stories from the front lines of the pandemic

BY BETH KASZUBA, PhD



For many people, working in healthcare is a calling. They're driven to put in long hours in sometimes difficult conditions by a deep desire to help others.

But when an extraordinary event like a pandemic occurs, doctors, nurses and other personnel are also scared and sometimes overwhelmed, just like the rest of us.

Yet the men and women who staff our hospitals and clinics continue to go into work every day, setting aside their own concerns and selflessly caring for those in our communities — whether that means cleaning rooms, transporting patients, serving meals, screening for the new virus or performing emergency surgery.

Here's a glimpse at life inside Geisinger right now, on the front lines.

Have a story to share about someone who's going above and beyond to combat COVID-19 in our communities? Tag us using #LongLiveHeroes.



"I take it one day at a time, try to gather the correct facts and try not to let the media get me worked up. I signed up for this when I decided to be a nurse. It helps me to think of the difference we're making in our patients' lives right now. They're what keep me going."

— Olivia Decker, RN, is staffing a COVID-19 care tent outside Geisinger Lewistown Hospital. Along with being grateful for the chance to help others, she's thankful for support from the community, including people who drop off food for the caregivers working in the tent.



Mary Ann Heller, a medical technologist in the Department of Laboratory Medicine, sits in front of the machines first used to test Geisinger patients for COVID-19.

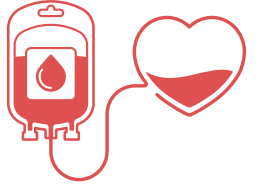
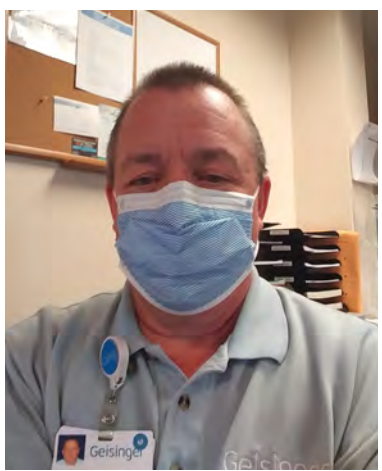


“No matter if I’m working in the Emergency Department on a normal day or in a tent during a pandemic, our patients always come first.”

– Alicia Katz, RN, is working in a triage tent at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, where she screens patients for COVID-19 and cares for those with symptoms. To keep her loved ones safe at home, she uses a clean station in her garage, where she puts her work clothes, shoes and work bag before entering her house. Once inside, she heads straight for the shower.

“People who know me know of my love for my family, especially my daughter and granddaughter. Right now, I’m sacrificing my time with them, but they understand completely. This is my job and it’s what I have to do. I love them, and the rest of my family, with all my heart and I need to do this to keep them safe. Knowing I’m doing my part during this critical time is what keeps me going,”

– Larry Reck, normally a Geisinger patient access representative, is now working in the screening tent outside Geisinger Lewistown Hospital. He admits that his new role is challenging, and he turns to prayer to stay positive, knowing that his attitude impacts his coworkers and patients.



BLOOD: WE STILL NEED IT.

Even during a pandemic, people have accidents or need emergency surgery. Which means we still need blood. Stop the shortage by giving a pint. We'll keep you safe. Guaranteed.

For a location near you, visit [GiveAPint.org](https://www.geisinger.org/giveapint).

Prevention.

Every ounce is crucial while we seek a cure.

BY BETH KASZUBA, PhD

Here are some of the easiest and most important things you can do.

Whether it's obeying the governor's order to stay at home as much as possible or hanging back a few extra feet when you wait in line at the grocery store, each step you take to combat COVID-19 is a chance to look out for your neighbors' (and your own) well-being.

Wash your hands — the right way.

It's not enough to just give your hands a quick rinse with a dab of soap. To really stop germs, you need to scrub them vigorously for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

And get every inch of skin, from your hands to your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.

Why? Because germs are more resilient than you think. They can survive a light wash, then make their way onto your face or other surfaces.

Cover that cough or sneeze, vampire-style.

Feeling the urge to cough or sneeze? Don't use your hands to block the blast. Instead, bury your nose and mouth in your crooked elbow, like Dracula whipping his cape over the lower half of his face.

It might look dramatic, but it's hands-down the best move you can make. (Another good option: Cough or sneeze into a tissue. Just be sure to throw it away and wash your hands afterward.)

Why? Like most colds and flu, COVID-19 is primarily spread by droplets of saliva. Coughing or sneezing into your hand means you're likely spreading germs onto whatever you touch next.



Practice physical distancing.

Whenever possible, steer clear of other people in public places.

And remember: Physical distancing is different from social distancing.

You're probably hearing the term "social distancing" a lot lately, but what's really needed is some physical distance between people. It's actually important to keep in contact with friends and loved ones, especially as our time of isolation grows. So call. Video chat. Email. Send an old-fashioned handwritten letter. Those who might be isolated to begin with, like seniors with limited mobility, will especially appreciate the connection.

But when you're out and about, doing only those approved necessary activities, keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others.

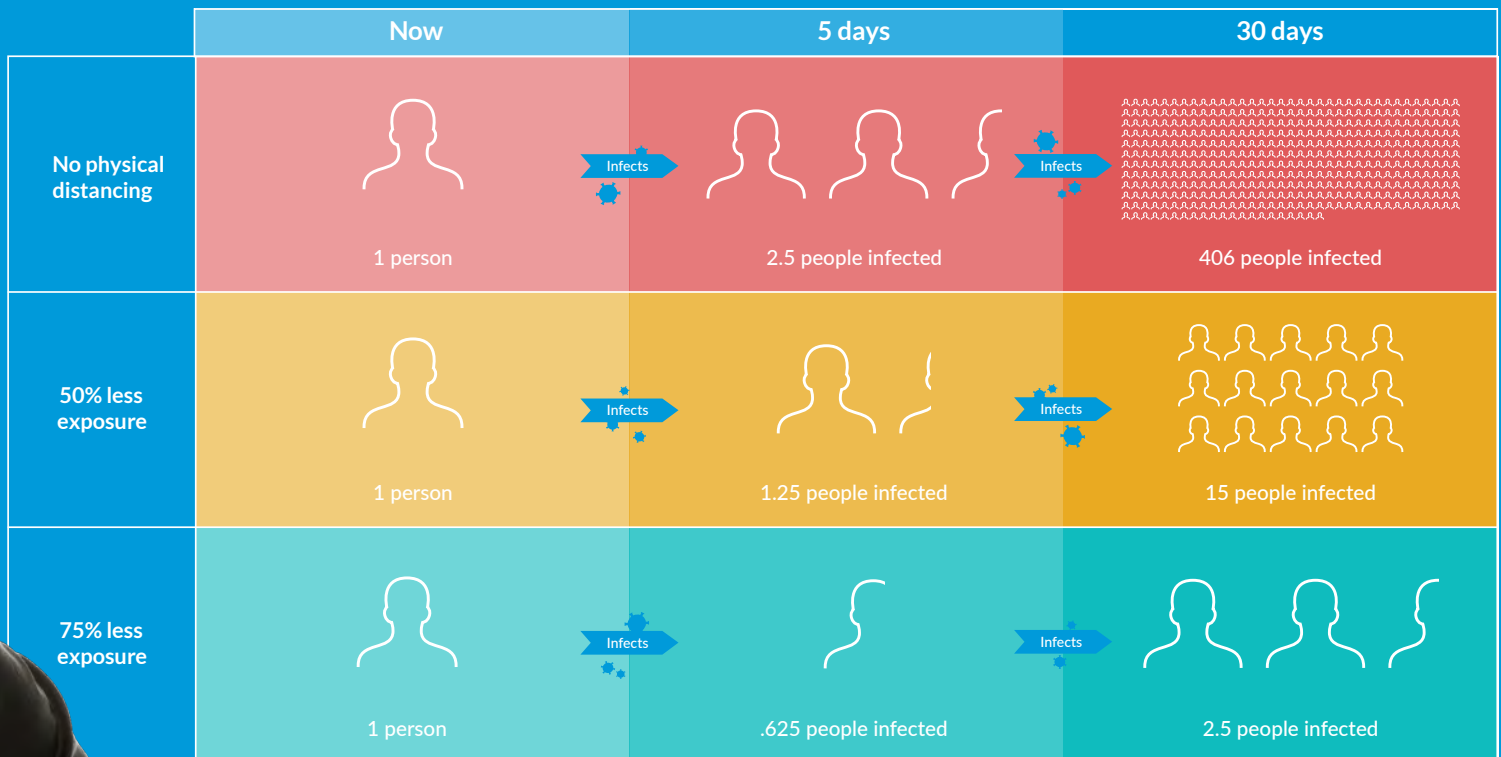
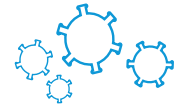
Why? Droplets from a cough or sneeze generally don't travel more than 6 feet. By staying outside that perimeter, you're safe if someone doesn't do the proper vampire face-covering move.



Three simple steps. Big results.

Stop COVID-19 in its tracks:

- Keep at least 6 feet of personal space between yourself and others
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly
- Cover your cough or sneeze



The family that stays in together... Might need some survival tips.

(Especially if you've got teens)

BY BETH KASZUBA, PhD

You love your partner, your kids — the roommate who's been crashing with you since college.

But let's face it. Right now, we're enjoying a lot of togetherness.

Staying at home can be especially difficult for teenagers, who are usually involved in multiple activities and eager to assert their independence.

Here are some hints for hunkering down with a teen or two. Or three.

Your teen is physically ill-equipped to weather a pandemic

Humans' instinct for self-preservation is rooted in the brain's frontal cortex, which doesn't fully develop until the mid- to late-20s. It's why young people are often reckless and impulsive.

Keeping that in mind can help you understand your teen's frustration with being isolated at home. Especially when statistics show that young people usually recover from COVID-19 without serious problems.

Social distancing and social media

Your teen is probably already adept at communicating from a distance on a number of platforms. In a way, that makes them uniquely equipped to stay physically isolated.

Still, it's important to keep monitoring your teenager's social media, just like always.

A few questions you can ask:

- Do you feel like your friends are posting accurate or idealized representations of life at their homes?
- What rumors are you hearing about COVID-19, school closings or future activities?
- Are there creative or productive ways you can connect — like by holding a virtual concert or playing a board game together over FaceTime or Zoom?



Missed milestones. It's a real problem.

While missing school might seem like a dream come true, there's a good chance your teenager is also missing activities they enjoy and maybe even milestones, like prom, sports playoffs or graduation. This prospect becomes even more likely now that schools are closed indefinitely.

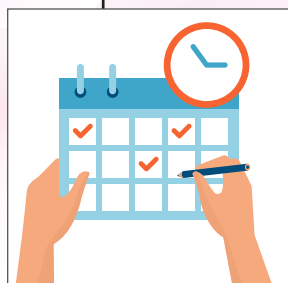
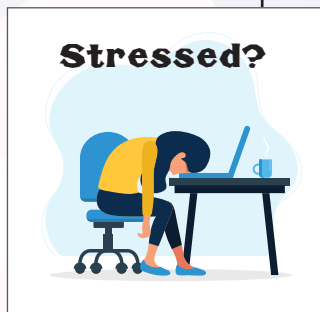
From your teen's perspective, these are life events that might not be repeated. Show them sympathy and let them know you understand.

Remember, this is a crucial time in your teen's social development, and it's being interrupted by forces beyond their control. As adults, we have a responsibility to make informed, thoughtful parenting decisions that protect their mental health — and make it as much of a priority as their physical safety.

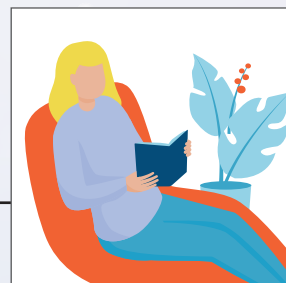


One antidote to stress? *Self-care.* *(That includes exercise.)*

BY BETH KASZUBA, PhD



Maintain your routine where possible



Focus on positive activities

Make time to unwind

It's perfectly okay to do things that make you happy. In fact, it's not just okay. It's good for your health. Spend time reading, writing, knitting, decluttering, painting, meditating or doing yoga or yard work — whatever you enjoy.

“If you like to cook, plan out your next few days of meals and cook healthy dishes for yourself and everyone in your house using what you have on hand. This will also challenge your creativity and help you fight boredom,” says Laura Maphis, PhD, a psychologist at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. But she adds that if you're sick, you should leave the cooking to someone else.



A bonus?

Along with helping to manage stress, exercise helps boost and support the immune system.

Exercise new options to exercise

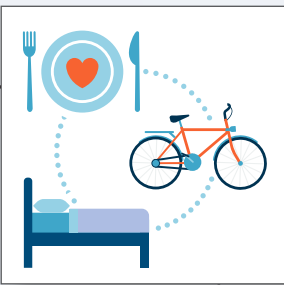
Gyms are closed, and that's a good thing: This isn't a good time to be sharing equipment. But that doesn't mean you can't exercise.

A few options?

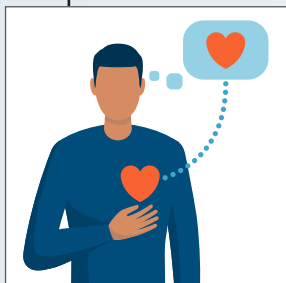
- Download a fitness app suited to your ability and experience.
- Get outside. You're not breaking any rules if you go for a walk, hike or bike ride, as long as you maintain safe physical distancing.
- If you're a physical fitness beginner, just move more around your house.

Of course, it's important to be safe.

"Ask your doctor first if you have any questions about your ability to exercise safely and consider low-impact forms of exercises," says Dr. Maphis.



**Keep a healthy lifestyle:
Proper diet,
exercise
and sleep**



**Acknowledge
your feelings**



Be mindful

Mindfulness, or living with awareness of each moment, has been growing in popularity, with good reason.

"Meditation and breathing exercises can help to slow your heart rate down and clear your mind," Dr. Maphis says. "When practiced regularly, they can buffer the effects of stress, which helps support your immune system."

And you don't have to meditate. Taking a bath or reading a book (and staying off social media during these times) helps you clear your mind and relax.

Take a few moments to remind yourself why you're practicing physical isolation, too. It's a selfless act meant to protect your older neighbors, parents and others we care about who may be vulnerable.

You're doing a good thing. Be good to yourself, too.



**See a doctor —
from home.**

Telemedicine allows you to see a doctor without leaving your house. That's safe and smart. More than 1,600 Geisinger physicians have been trained and now offer telemedicine appointments. Learn more at [geisinger.org/telemedicine](https://www.geisinger.org/telemedicine).

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Geisinger



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