

Tip sheet

Supporting aging parents during COVID-19

There are a number of people who are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and they need to take extra precautions. These include older adults and people who have underlying medical conditions, like heart or lung disease or diabetes. You may be living with, or in close proximity to, your aging parents. Or you may be in a different state or country to your parents. Whatever your situation, you may be experiencing increased concern, anxiety, and/or worry for your loved ones during the pandemic.

Steps to reduce risk

- If they are unaware, inform your parent(s) about the increased risks of COVID-19 and the need to take extra precautions, without creating panic or anxiety.
- Advise your parent to stay home if possible.
- Discuss ways of getting medication and groceries delivered to the house.
- Remind parent(s) about the importance of self-care (sleep, exercise, well-balanced meals, meditation, and avoid alcohol).
- Wash your hands often prior to and during a visit with an aging parent.
- Take precautions to keep space between yourself and an aging parent (2 metres).
- Have a back-up carer-giver plan, in the event you get sick or live far away.
- Help them put all important phone numbers in their contacts (primary care physician, nurse helpline, urgent care facility etc).

Staying connected

- COVID-19 may exacerbate feelings of loneliness and/or social isolation in older adults:
- Stay socially connected with an aging parent(s). Show them how to use technology to phone, video chat, and/or text.
 - Encourage parent(s) to stay socially connected with other family members and their friends.
 - Help an aging parent stay connected with local community organisations through online services.

Reach out

- The wellbeing page on [bhp.com](#) ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) provides support on a range of valuable mental health and wellbeing information for work and life, including a range of tools, tips and coping mechanisms.
- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free, confidential counseling services. This benefit is available to employees and their immediate family members. Each person has access to six free counseling sessions per member per issue per year.
- Stay in contact with your leader and keep him/her updated on your personal situation, needs and concerns.
- Leverage Company policies (Flexible Work Program Guideline, elder care resources) and local leave provisions (caregiver leave).

Need more information?

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [John Hopkins Medicine](#)
- [UNICEF](#)
- Mental health tip sheets on [bhp.com](#) – [Aging parents](#) | [Living alone or feeling lonely](#)