

Pandemics and quarantines are known to cause a significant increase in mental health and substance use issues. There are many actions you can take to improve your mental health. Consider the following:

- **Prioritize sleep** - ensure at least 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Inadequate sleep can worsen mood and make it harder to cope with stressors. Don't consume caffeine later than early afternoon as this may interfere with your ability to fall asleep.
- **Get regular exercise** - this increases energy, improves health, and enhances one's overall sense of wellness. As weather permits, consider engaging in outdoor activities to get a change in scenery, discover new places, and distract yourself from any down or anxious thoughts.
- **Connect with others** - staying in touch with family and friends, as well as meeting new people, provides a support network and often improves mood.
- **Consume healthy foods** - regular, well-balanced meals and good hydration provide necessary fuel for daily activities and also for your brain. Poor nutrition often worsens mood.
- **Engage in activities that you enjoy, as well as try new ones** - this bolsters mood and also helps your mind stay engaged.
- **Make plans for each day** - mood often improves with a more structured, purposeful day.
- **Exercise caution with alcohol or recreational drug use** - people may find they are self-medicating with substance use, and this can worsen mood.
- **Try an app or online program** for emotional and mental well-being. (access <https://uhs.umich.edu/apps-stress> to find a list). If your stress is

severe or unmanageable, talk with your provider and/or therapist and check out these resources:

- **University of Michigan Depression Center Toolkit** at <https://www.depressioncenter.org/depression-toolkit>
- **University Health Service resources for students and the U-M community:** <https://uhs.umich.edu/stressresources>.
- <http://careguides.med.umich.edu/psych-covid> provides additional materials Michigan Medicine experts selected for people coping with traumatic stress reactions, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, sleep difficulties and other mental health problems magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic.



When should I seek medical care?

Seek medical care if you feel depressed or anxious and if have not found relief with self-care actions such as those listed on this document. If your symptoms are significantly impacting your functioning or quality of life, see a mental health provider such as your primary care clinician. A database of mental health providers is also available at this link: <https://umcpd.umich.edu/>.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

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