



Wellbeing

COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused us to react in a number of different ways. It can make us feel nervous, anxious, confused or stressed, or perhaps worried about whether someone we love is at risk. We may also be concerned about self-isolating and the thought of being alone and lonely. On top of this we may also be worried about practical details such as how we will get food delivered, or what will happen if there are enforced closures.

Every single one of these reactions is normal and perfectly understandable.

The good news is, we really can support each other during this difficult time and help each other to manage anxiety – even when we feel isolated. There are a number of practical steps that will help us all to look after our mental, emotional, and spiritual health during this time and, most importantly help us find a sense of calm.

Meditate and Breathe

If things are difficult or our anxiety and worry levels are high, taking long, deep breaths in for about 4 seconds, with a 2 second hold, has a real calming effect. This is because it causes our body's defences to relax and lets our brain release endorphins, which are the natural chemicals that calm us down. Practicing slow deep breathing decreases stress, relieves pain, increases our energy, lowers our blood pressure, and improves our digestion. There are a range of apps that you may find useful such as 'Calm' or 'Breathe' which provide you with a way of doing simple meditations.



Exercise

Regular exercise is very important, and can be done at home. Even the simplest of exercise releases endorphins. You could be doing routine stretches, lifting tins of food as weights, walking up and down the stairs at home or following a Youtube home workout. It helps:

- Reduce tension, stress, and frustration
- Increase our focus and mental alertness
- Improve our sleep
- Increase our energy

You'd be surprised at how much you can do in the comfort of your living room or garden! However, if you are isolating due to illness, please take time to rest and let your body recover.



Switch off, and stop Googling!

Limit the amount of social media you expose yourself to. Everyone has something to say about COVID-19, or most things for that matter, and it's highly likely they'll be no more informed than yourself. The barrage of information, opinion, and 24/7 reporting will only mess with your head and anxiety levels! Limit your intake of media, and keep it to a trusted source or two. Stop Googling, and if you feel yourself getting carried away, switch off altogether.



Not working? Do something engaging

It's important to keep our minds busy if we are going through periods of anxiety. Losing yourself in something fun, or meaningful to you.

Here are some suggestions that will make you feel good and reduce any stress or negative thinking.

- Read that book you've left on the shelf for too long
- Play games (with or without children!)
- Listen to music, but really listen
- Connect with friends over the phone
- Write something - creative or journaling, writing can be calming and problem solving



If you are well, try to do your bit for others. Why not send messages of love and care, or pick up things for others when you do the weekly shop.



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Are you spending more time than usual worrying about your health at the moment? Whilst it is important to keep an eye on how we are feeling, especially if you do have symptoms of a common cold or the flu, try not to let yourself get carried away worrying about your health. This will only cause you more stress, and may bring about symptoms themselves!

Symptoms of a common cold

Cold symptoms come on gradually and can include:

- a blocked or runny nose
- a sore throat
- headaches
- muscle aches
- coughs
- sneezing
- a raised temperature
- pressure in your ears and face
- loss of taste and smell

Symptoms of the flu

Flu symptoms can include:

- a sudden fever – a temperature of 38^c or above
- an aching body
- feeling tired or exhausted
- a dry cough
- a sore throat
- a headache
- difficulty sleeping
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea or tummy pain
- feeling sick and being sick

Symptoms of the Coronavirus COVID-19

Symptoms of the Coronavirus COVID-19 include a continuous chesty cough, difficulty breathing and high fever-like temperatures.

Did you know that **stress** can cause the body to feel heated, a headache, a loss of appetite, sweaty palms, higher heart rate, weight gain and muscle tensions.

With all this in mind, it is easy to get carried away, trying to find the answer to how you are feeling. Try to keep a clear head and use the following techniques to manage any health based anxiety.

1. Stop looking for answers online! You'll soon find a number of health related problems that have nothing to do with how you are feeling!
2. Be rational with yourself, use a tool like the table opposite to check in on the reality of how you are doing
3. If you are extremely worried, keep a diary. Note down any changes and put it out of your mind until tomorrow's check in
4. Distract yourself with things you enjoy
5. Note how much reassurance you are seeking from others and try to cut this down
6. Try to relax and let yourself rest

My physical symptoms	Rational thinking
<i>E.g. (16.03.20) Runny nose, headache, sore throat</i>	<i>I am more likely to have a common cold than anything</i>
<i>(21.03.20) Additional aches and pains. Asked a few people, they think it is a common cold</i>	<i>It is still most likely a common cold. Rest up.</i>

*All symptom information taken from NHS.uk (16.3.20)



Wellbeing

Store Cupboard Recipes



Lentil Dahl and Chapatis

A great dish made from cheap ingredients you'll find in your store cupboard. Easy to make this can be a great dinner or a nice lunch in smaller portions.

Ingredients

For the dahl (serves 4)

- 2 tbsp oil (preferably coconut)
- 1 large onion diced
- 200g red split lentils
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp chilli powder or paprika
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 600g vegetable stock

For the chapatis (makes 10)

- 280g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 180ml warm water or as needed

Time: 20 mins prep, 40 mins cook

Method

1. Start with the dahl. Put the oil in a large saucepan with the diced onions. Cook for approximately 5 minutes on a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft.
2. Add the spices, salt and puree and stir through.
3. Add the lentils to the pan, and quickly follow with the vegetable stock. Stir all the ingredients together.
4. Bring to the boil, then turn down and simmer for 30-40 mins, stirring occasionally. You want the lentils to be tender and aromatic.
5. Meanwhile put the dry ingredients for the chapatis in a bowl and mix together.
6. Add the warm water and 1 1/2 tbsp of oil into the mixture and stir with a wooden spoon to form a dough.
7. Tip the dough onto a floured surface and knead gently with your hands until smooth. This can take up to 10 minutes.
8. Divide the dough into 10 balls, or less if you would like larger chapatis.
9. Roll out into thin disks (about 2mm thick) and with your fingers rub a little oil, salt and pepper onto each.
10. Roll the bread in one direction to form a thin sausage shape, and then curl this in to form a circular ball.
11. When ready to cook, warm up a large frying pan with a thin layer of oil. Roll out the balls of dough again into a thin tortilla and place into the pan.
12. Cook either side for a about a minute on a medium heat and keep somewhere warm



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Store Cupboard Recipes



Bean and tomato stew

A cheap dish, and easy to make. This serves a great dinner for the family. Whether you choose to put pesto on top, or have bread on the side, it's a nutritious, delicious meal for all.

Ingredients

(Serves 4)

- 1 tsp oil
- 1 large onion diced
- 2 medium carrots sliced
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 tin of chickpeas drained
- 1 tin of beans drained (can be haricot, kidney, canellini or more chickpeas)
- 1 garlic clove chopped
- 1 tsp chilli powder or paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tins of chopped tomatoes
- 200g vegetable stock
- Cheese for grating
- Optional Pesto

Time: 10 mins prep, 35 mins cook

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the sliced carrots and brown for 5 minutes. You will need to stir to turn the carrots over.
2. Add the onion, garlic and spices to the pot and fry off for 2-3 minutes.
3. Put the beans, tomatoes and stock in the pan. Simmer down for 20-25 minutes. You want to lose some of the liquid, but still maintain a soup-like consistency.
4. Stir through the spinach, and leave to wilt for 2-3 minutes.
5. Serve the family with a small amount of grated cheese resting on top. If you like add an optional spoon of pesto to the top of each bowl.

If you are in need of inspiration, there is a wealth of 'Store cupboard Recipes' available online, and on BBC Good Food <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/feature/storecupboard>