



Women's Health Awareness Transforming Communities by Enhancing Women's Health



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Taking Control: Keys to Coping During These Stressful Times



Long-term stress may contribute to the development of [chronic disease](#). Stress affects everyone, young and old, rich and poor. It can be a reaction to situations when a person feels threatened or anxious. Stress can be positive, for example, when preparing for a wedding, or negative when dealing with traumatic events. Amid the country's ongoing chronic health situation, America is battling two major traumatic health-related crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and racism.

The pandemic and the social injustice of racism has significantly impacted human health, unemployment, and our social interactions. COVID-19 has caused much suffering and stress for Americans. On June 17, the [Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center](#) reported more than 2.1 million COVID-19 cases in the U.S., with a death toll of 116,700. These cases continue to climb nationally. Unemployment numbers have increased dramatically with an [overall unemployment rate of 13.3%, while Black people \(16.8%\) and women \(13.9%\)](#)

[experience higher rates](#). Life as we know it has changed due to physical distancing policies, job loss, wearing personal protective equipment in public, teleworking, and home schooling our children.

In America, and globally, the growing public outcry against social injustice and systemic racism calls for change. For years, systemic racism has impacted the health of Blacks and communities of color and has manifested in health disparities and inequities. Evidence-based outcomes, born out of implicit bias, create unequal access to health care. Additionally, environmental inequities and injustices play a major role as Blacks and underrepresented groups tend to live in inner cities, near highways, and near environmentally hazardous facilities — ultimately resulting in long-term exposures that impact overall health.

Especially during this time, it is important to recognize the symptoms of stress and anxiety. Symptoms may be physical or emotional. **Common reactions to a stressful event** may include:

- disbelief, shock, and a feeling of numbness
- feelings of sadness, frustration, and helplessness
- difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- smoking or use of alcohol or drugs

For most people, these reactions are normal and expected responses that generally lessen with time. However, in some cases, they may continue for longer periods of time and interfere with everyday life. If your symptoms of stress are interfering with your daily life or are not getting better over time, seek professional help. **Find helpful resources in the “We’re Better Together” section near the end of this message.**

To reduce stress, it is important to find healthy ways to cope. Coping strategies include self-care and identifying appropriate support systems. Here is a list of various **coping strategies from the [CDC](#) and [National Institute of Mental Health](#) that may be helpful:**

- **Take care of yourself.** Get plenty of sleep, eat healthy well-balanced meals, and stay active on a regular basis to cope with stressful feelings.
- **Talk to others.** Share your feelings with trusted friends, family, health professionals, and faith leaders.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** These substances may seem to help, but they can create additional problems and increase your stressful feelings.
- **Disconnect from electronic devices.** Find a hobby that brings you peace and relaxation, such as gardening, reading, journaling, or walking in nature. If news events are causing you stress and anxiety, take a break from listening or watching.
- **[Listen to music.](#)** Music can be therapeutic when dealing with stress. Studies show that music can reduce levels of stress, increase coping abilities, or enhance relaxation.
- **Spend time with loved ones and trusted friends.** People who are

supportive can provide a feeling that you are not alone and serve as a reminder that others care.

- **Maintain healthy, normal daily routines.** Routines can provide a sense of structure and feeling of accomplishment and control when everything around you seems to be out of control.
- **Recognize when you need additional help.** If problems continue, or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.
- **Meditation helps you to re-center, refocus, and recharge.** This practice helps control anxiety and stress by promoting good emotional health.

Try this five-minute meditation to help cope with stress:



- 1. Find a quiet place** where you can sit and breathe peacefully.
- 2. Set a timer for five minutes**, which releases the need to keep track of time.
- 3. Be alert and relaxed.** Posture is important. Sit in an upright and comfortable position that allows you to be relaxed and maintain focus.
- 4. Begin with the breath.** Bring your awareness to your breathing, noticing the air flowing in and out of your body. Follow the physical sensations you feel while breathing, rather than thinking about breathing.
- 5. Find your anchor.** Your anchor is your breath. Where do you notice your breath? Is it your nose or your stomach? Make that your focus of attention.
- 6. Train your concentration.** Take notice of the way you inhale and exhale. If thoughts come to your mind, gently push them aside and refocus on your inhale and exhale.

Reference: Everyday Mindfulness, National Geographic, September 2019

FAST FACTS!!!

Is it possible to catch coronavirus through my eyes? The best available evidence suggests that COVID-19 is most commonly spread by respiratory droplets, especially when



people cough and sneeze. These droplets can enter your body through the **eyes**, nose, and mouth, either directly or by touching a contaminated surface. The best ways to protect your eyes when in public include: not touching your face, wearing a face shield, wearing glasses, sunglasses, physical distancing at least 6 feet, and washing or sanitizing your hands frequently.

[Click Here For More Information](#)

Get to know Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, an African American research fellow who is helping to lead COVID-19 vaccine development. Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett is a viral immunologist and research fellow in the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). She is also a fellow North Carolinian and received her Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The pre-clinical effort for the COVID-19 vaccine was driven in part by Dr. Corbett along with other senior scientists at the VRC. Learn more about Dr. Corbett in this [Speaking of Science podcast](#). (Length: 29:12)



[Click Here For More Information](#)

We're Better Together

Help is available if you or someone you care about is in a crisis and feels overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety.

For support or help, contact the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) at **800-985-5990**, **Text TalkWithUs to 66746**. TTY **1-800-846-8517**. Or contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at **800-273-8255**.

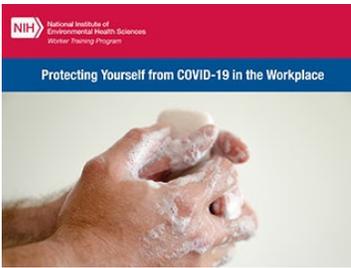
Call 911 if you or others you know want to harm themselves.

A new COVID-19 crisis: Domestic violence

In the mist of the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence is on the rise. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence and needs support, call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 for TTY.

If you're unable to speak safely there is an online chat. You can visit <https://thehotline.org> or text **LOVEIS to **22522**.**

If you are in a domestic violence crisis, go to a safe place and **call 911.**



Training is available for essential and frontline workers to protect themselves. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) [has a training website](#) for essential and frontline workers to learn how to protect themselves from exposure to COVID-19.

[Click Here for Training](#)

Testing Sites for COVID-19 in Durham, Raleigh and across the Triangle

Testing sites for COVID-19 in Durham, Raleigh, and across the Triangle: Approximately 200 medical facilities are currently offering testing for COVID-19 across North Carolina. If you believe you need a test, contact your local health care provider and report your symptoms.

Please note: You **must call** before going to any of these locations as appointments may be required.

DURHAM COUNTY COVID-19 TESTING SITES

- [Avance Care in Durham](#)
- [Duke Primary Care Croasdaile in Durham](#)
- [Duke Regional Hospital in Durham](#)
- [Duke University Hospital in Durham](#)

ORANGE COUNTY COVID-19 TESTING SITES

- [IndyCare Health in Hillsborough](#)
- [UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and in Hillsborough](#)

CHATHAM COUNTY COVID-19 TESTING SITES

- [Avance Care - South Chapel Hill in Chapel Hill](#)

JOHNSTON COUNTY COVID-19 TESTING SITES

- [Avance Care in Clayton](#)

WAKE COUNTY COVID-19 TESTING SITES

- [Avance Care: curbside COVID-19 testing at all 15 locations, which include:](#)
 - Apex, Cary, West Cary, Central Raleigh, North Raleigh, Northeast Raleigh, Northwest Raleigh, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, and Wake Forest
- [Avance Community Health in Raleigh](#)
- [FastMed Urgent Care Walk-in Clinic in Apex, Garner \(N.C. 42\) and Raleigh \(Creedmoor Road\)](#)
- [Duke Primary Care in Apex](#)
- [Duke Raleigh Hospital in Raleigh](#)
- [Duke Urgent Care at Brier Creek and Harps Mill in Raleigh](#)
- [PM Pediatrics Urgent Care in Morrisville](#)
- [UNC Rex Hospital in Raleigh](#)
- [WakeMed and WakeMed Key Community Care](#)

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For additional information or if you have any questions, please contact
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