

What to do if you're anxious about coronavirus



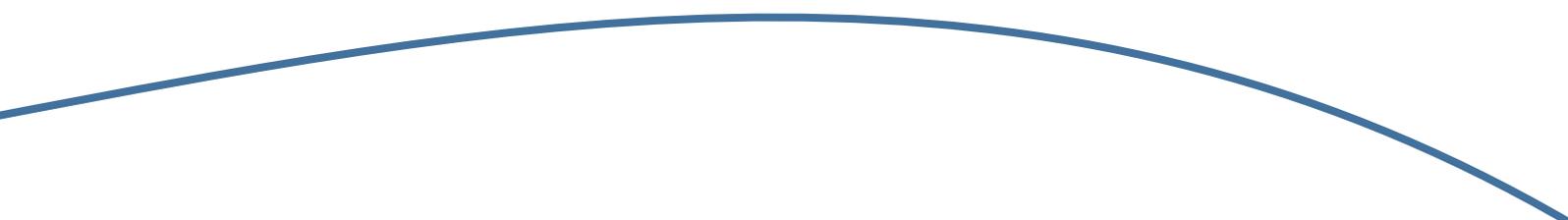
What to do if you're anxious about coronavirus

Feeling concerned or overwhelmed by the news is understandable, especially if you are struggling with your mental health or you have a physical illness. It might be that you're anxious about your own health, or someone in your family, or what impact the virus will have on your life.

Here are some steps you can take if you are feeling anxious:

1. Talk to someone about how you're feeling

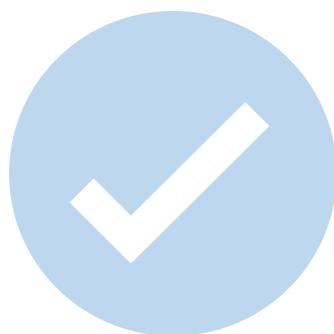
Whilst it is normal to feel worried, if you are starting to feel overwhelmed, it's important to acknowledge your feelings and speak to someone you trust, whether that's a friend, a family member, a teacher or a helpline.



2. Arm yourself with the facts

There is a lot of information about the virus out there and false reports can fuel anxiety. Stay on top of what's happening by using the [Government website](#), it is the most up-to-date and reliable source of information. The [NHS common questions](#) about the virus can also be useful if you are worried about symptoms or family members.

You might see stories or posts on social media that make you feel anxious. It can be very hard to know whether or not social media posts are true, so try not to rely on updates from there.



3. Know what you can do

If you are feeling scared or panicked by coronavirus, remind yourself that there are practical things you can do.

There is lots of advice on the [NHS website](#).

You might feel anxious about this advice because it might trigger compulsive thoughts and unhelpful behaviours to do with washing and hygiene. If this happens to you, please talk to someone you trust about it. You could ask them to help you, and let people around you know what you find helpful and what you don't.

It can also help to have a few gentle and regular reminders up your sleeve if you start to feel anxious about washing or hygiene. Remember this advice is about caring for yourself and others, but there is a limit to what you can do – so whatever happens, try to be kind to yourself.



4. Don't overexpose yourself to the news

Staying informed can make you feel in control but the constant news reports could also become overwhelming. Try to get your information from reputable websites (like those we've mentioned above). If you do want to read or watch the news, try to limit the amount of time you spend and stick to regular intervals in the days. If you are finding it hard not to think about the news, try to plan some activities that you enjoy and which will take your mind off things, whether that's going for a walk, chatting to a friend, watching a film or reading a book.

Do take a break from social media if you feel like the updates are getting too much. Remember you are in control of what you see on your feed, take breaks when you do feel like things are getting too much or mute and unfollow accounts that make you feel more worried.

For more advice and tips on looking after your mental health on social media, check out **Young Minds #OwnYourFeed campaign.**



5. Stick to your normal routine

With so much uncertainty in the news, sticking to your routine can really help maintain a sense of normality. You might want to add extra activities into your day that make you feel calm, but try to keep to your daily schedule as much as possible.



6. Find things that help you feel calm

Like at any other time, it's important that you are not only looking after your physical health, but your mental health too. Think about some activities that can help when you are feeling overwhelmed, like breathing techniques, writing down how you feel, playing music or talking to a friend. For some ideas, have a look at [how you can make a self-soothe box](#), or these [coping techniques](#). (Some resources will be uploaded to Shared Resources soon). Often things that distract you will help ease feelings of anxiety, but try to avoid turning to stimulants like cigarettes or alcohol which can leave you feeling worse.

7. Prepare

Now that you are home for a period of time, talk to your family about how this will work and share your feelings with them, if you can. We understand that this could be quite a daunting prospect, but try to think of this as a chance to live in a different way for a while. Think about what you might want to do during this time, how you will stay connected and how you are prioritising your wellbeing. Planning might help reduce any anxiety or troubling thoughts.



8. Dealing with self-isolation

If you're not well, or have been in contact with people who are not well, you may be asked to 'self-isolate'. Self-isolation means staying away from other people to prevent the potential spread of illness. If you find you have been advised to self-isolate, the government have guidelines on their website on how to do this. Wherever you might be when you self-isolate, think about who you can keep in contact with and how you can use apps such as **WhatsApp** and **Zoom** to talk to someone face to face. It's important that you talk to people you trust during this time and continue to stay connected. They might be in the same situation and can help you navigate anything you are going through.

If you are on any medication, please do continue taking it, unless advised otherwise by your doctor. If you are worried about getting your prescription, call the pharmacy where you collect your medication, or your GP. They can arrange getting your prescription delivered or picked up by someone else.



Maintain your routine as much as possible by getting up in the morning and going to bed at the same time. Eating regular meals and staying hydrated will help also, as well as taking breaks throughout the day to talk to someone or do something that you enjoy. If it's possible, try activities in your home that get you moving, like yoga or dancing. PE with Joe on YouTube is recommended.

It's important during this time that you keep acknowledging how you are feeling and do this regularly. We know that things might continue to feel overwhelming or scary. It's good for you to talk about this where possible – know that you can say '**I feel anxious about...**' whenever you need to, and as regularly as you need to.

You may find that you need extra support, so think about who you can turn to. It could be someone you know, or a helpline that can talk to you about how you might be feeling.



Helpline services available

Lifeline

- Crisis response line for people in distress or despair (Mental Health, Depression, Suicidal thoughts)
- Phone 0808 808 8000 (24 hours)



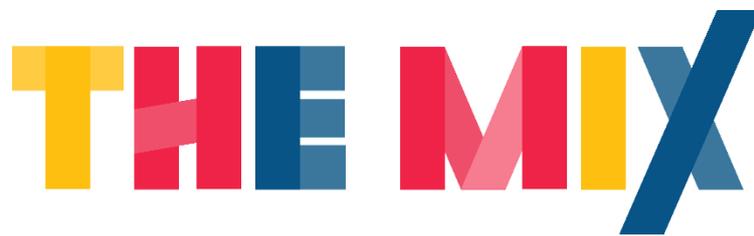
Childline

- Comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling.
- Phone 0800 1111 (24 hours)
- www.childline.org.uk - Chat 1-2-1 with a counsellor online



The Mix

- Crisis messenger text service (Suicidal thoughts, Mental Health, General Advice)
- Phone 0808 808 4994 (24 hours)
- [Get support online](#)



Anna Freud National Centre

- Supporting young people's mental health during periods of disruption (Anxiety, Mental health)
- www.annafreud.org



**Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families**