



Caring During COVID-19

How Family Caregivers Can Prepare for a Pandemic

The declaration of a global pandemic in recent weeks has caused considerable panic among the aging community. However, family caregivers are perhaps the most worried, knowing that they could end up being a carrier that passes COVID-19 to their more vulnerable counterpart; they may even be at a high risk themselves, scared of what might happen if they were to contract the disease. In this instance, the CDC has recommended specific plans of action for those who are acting as caregivers, in order to plan for the worst-case scenario:

1. Create a household plan of action:
 - a. Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan, such as household members, other relatives, or friends.
 - b. Get to know your neighbors. Talk with your community about emergency planning. Consider joining neighborhood chats or social media groups in order to stay informed.
 - c. Identify aid organizations in your community. Create a list that your household is able to access in a moment of crisis. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies.
 - d. Create an emergency contact list. Be sure your entire household has a list of contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health-care providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.
 - i. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects using regular household detergency and water. These can include tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles.

How Family Caregivers Can Prepare for a Pandemic Continued

2. Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions.
 - a. Everyday preventive actions you can begin enacting now:
 - i. Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - ii. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
 - iii. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects using regular household detergent and water. These can include tables, counter tops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles.
 - iv. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose.
 - b. If you do not have access to soap and water, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - c. Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members if needed, including a separate bathroom. If someone becomes sick, clean these spaces as often as possible.
3. Be prepared if your child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed.
4. Learn about the emergency operations plan at your child's school or childcare facility. Understand the plan for continuing education and social services, such as student meal pro.

For questions on Area Agency on Aging (AAA) services please call us toll free:
1-877-521-3500