

RETURN TO WORK AMID COVID-19:

A Cleveland Clinic Guide



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We're on the Same Team



The COVID-19 pandemic has entered a new phase. We've flattened the curve. People are returning to work. Now our caregivers want to know what comes next. Will they be safe? Has the organization changed? What can they expect from the future?

As leaders, we need to deliver clear, accurate and concise answers to these questions. We owe it to our caregivers and those they serve. Communication has never been more important. Honesty and transparency are essential. It's time to share information, not to withhold it. We are all on the same team. Not only within our organizations, but in our broader industries and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the best in America's workforce, whatever they do. As we begin to transition to the world's "new normal," there are many new health and safety issues to consider. To help ease this transition, Cleveland Clinic recently launched a COVID-19 platform for employers. I urge you to read this book carefully and visit our *Creating a Safe Workplace* site (clevelandclinic.org/covid19atwork). Both offer expert insight and resources for safely resuming operations.

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Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a number of new challenges, especially for businesses looking to reopen. While managers and employees may feel a sense of urgency to get their business back to normal as soon as possible, there are new guidelines and revised practices that should be followed to allow for a safe, stable return.

These resources will help you through the key steps of reopening your business in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- › Making sure your facility is fully clean, disinfected and equipped with a blueprint for maintaining safe conditions.
- › Setting up a support system for employees as they return to work and adjust to new realities and emotional challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- › Creating a plan for a safe work environment that protects employees and customers alike from risks connected to COVID-19, including exposure and transmission.

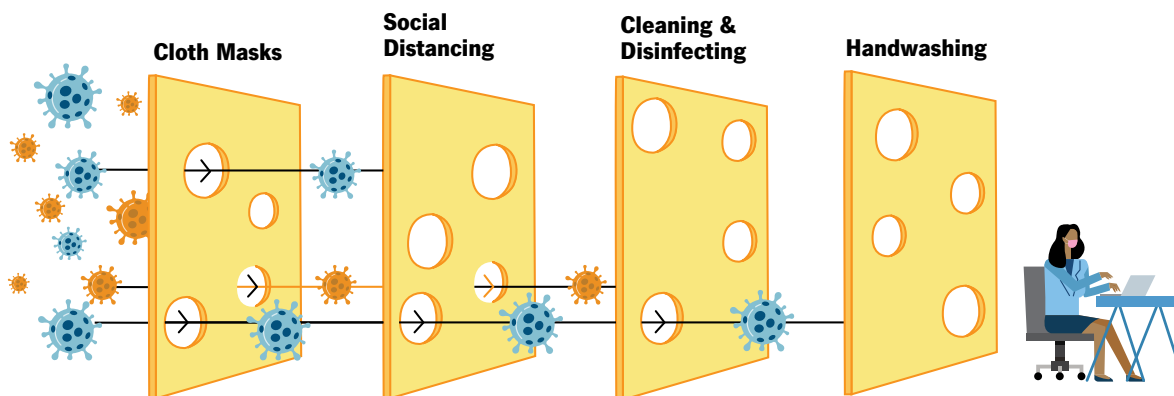
The response to the COVID-19 pandemic is continuously evolving as we learn more about the virus and the best techniques to address the associated risks. Cleveland Clinic's materials are based on currently available data and guidelines from the CDC and other resources as of May 12, 2020. This guidance may change from time to time and should be used only as a general reference. Employers are solely responsible for determining the best practices to deploy within their work environments.

Please visit clevelandclinic.org/Covid19atwork for the latest updates or to request additional information.

Adding Layers of Protection

This guide describes many ways to keep the safety of your employees and customers central to your COVID-19 planning and response. While no single tactic is 100% effective, when used together, they add layers of protection. These proven practices address a variety of risk points and should be considered as a collection of actions to keep your workplace safe in the era of COVID-19.

In 1990, James Reason, PhD, introduced the **“Swiss Cheese Model”** that has been adopted to improve safety across many industries. In any work setting, there are inherent risks. Most of the time these risks are never realized because safeguards are in place to prevent them. These safeguards are represented in his model as multiple layers of swiss cheese. However, every process has “holes” that, under the right circumstances, can line up and lead to an error, accident or “hazard” as Reason described it.



The COVID-19 pandemic requires multiple layers of protection to keep the workplace safe. These layers of swiss cheese serve as safeguards for your organization and your people. When used together consistently, the holes (or weaknesses) in any single layer of protection should be offset by the strengths of another layer of intervention.

Per Reasons model, the more layers of effective interventions that are implemented, the less likely your business will contribute to the spread of COVID-19. For example, face coverings can slow the spread of COVID-19 and help prevent pre-symptomatic carriers from unknowingly transmitting it to others. However, no mask is 100% effective. Maintaining 6 feet from other individuals in your workplace is an effective way to reduce transmission of the virus, but may not always be possible. Cleaning and disinfecting equipment is extremely important, but it is impossible to keep a surface completely disinfected between cleanings. Frequent handwashing is essential to prevent the spread of the virus, and is just one element of a larger infection prevention strategy. While any one of these interventions is not perfect, when used in conjunction with a broader range of safety practices, the risk of COVID-19 transmission is significantly reduced.

This guide provides an overview of these safeguards to prevent the risk of infection spreading in your place of business and tools to support your workforce through these trying times.

General Recommendations

The best ways for employees to protect themselves from COVID-19:



Wear a face mask:

Protect yourself and others in public with a face covering, particularly where it's difficult to maintain a 6-foot distance from others. Try to avoid touching your face.



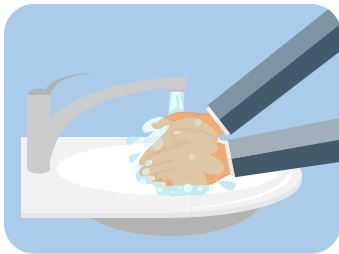
Cover your mouth and nose:

When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve, rather than your hands. Properly dispose of your tissue in a trash can.



Practice social and physical distancing:

Work from home (if possible), engage in social distancing, maintain a 6-foot distance from others and avoid crowded places and group gatherings.



Wash your hands:

Stop the spread of disease-causing germs by washing your hands often. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



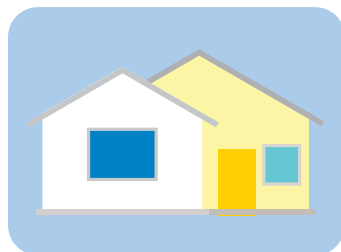
Avoid care facilities:

Do not visit nursing homes, long-term care facilities or retirement communities, unless you are providing critical assistance.



Clean and disinfect:

Use a virus-killing disinfectant to clean frequently touched surfaces such as phones, keyboards, doorknobs, handles and faucets.



Stay home when sick:

Avoid leaving home if you are sick. If you want or need to connect with your healthcare providers, first do so by phone or through virtual visits.



Maintain healthy habits:

Get enough sleep, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water and exercise, if you are able, to help keep your immune system strong.

Health and Safety

Make sure your business is safely and responsibly resuming operations for employees. Following these guidelines will help facilitate a safer environment as your workplace reopens.

Face masks

Cloth face coverings can be used for source control in the workplace. They are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to potentially help prevent transmission when used as a complement to social distancing. They are not a replacement for adequate distancing.

How to wear a mask or face cover

The CDC recommends keeping these criteria in mind when wearing a mask or face cover:

- › It should be snug but comfortable against the sides of the face.
- › It needs to be secured with ties or ear loops.
- › It should be made with multiple layers of material.
- › It must allow you to breathe without restriction.
- › It should be able to withstand machine washing and drying and not get damaged or change shape.

How to keep masks and face covers clean

The CDC recommends washing cloth face masks frequently, either by hand or in a washing machine. Individuals should take care not to touch their eyes, nose, mouth or face when removing a worn face covering, and to wash their hands immediately after removing them as they may carry infectious contaminants.



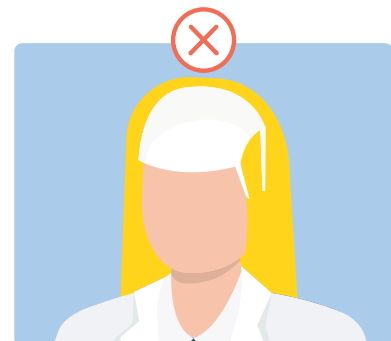
Correct



Mask Necklace



Mask Goatee



Mask Visor

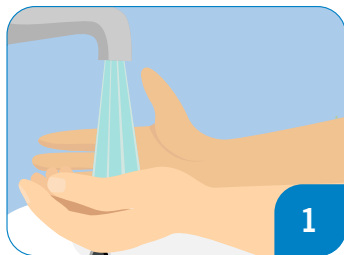
Handwashing

Washing our hands is one of the easiest and most important things we can do to stay healthy and stop the spread of bacteria and viruses.

Wash your hands:

- › Whenever they look dirty.
- › Before, during and after you prepare food.
- › Before eating.
- › Before and after contact with an ill person.
- › Before and after treating a cut, sore or wound.
- › After using the toilet or changing diapers.
- › When entering or exiting the workplace.
- › After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. (Wash your hands more often when you are sick to prevent spreading your illness to those around you.)
- › After touching animals or animal waste.
- › After touching garbage, body fluids, or anytime you have doubt if your hands are clean.

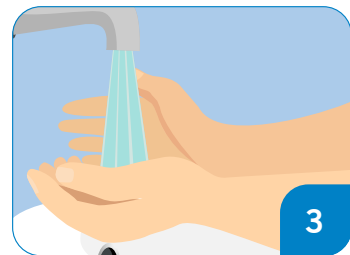
What's the proper technique for hand washing?



Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold).



Lather your hands with soap. Rub together 20+ seconds. Don't forget wrists, back of hands, between fingers + under nails.



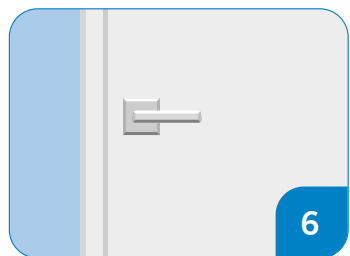
Rinse your hands well under running water.



Turn off the water with your elbow (or a clean towel).



Dry your hands with a clean towel or air dry them.



Used a towel? Use it to open the bathroom door.

When should we use alcohol-based hand sanitizers?

The CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible to reduce the amounts and types of all germs and chemicals on them. However, if soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based

hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol should be used. Hand sanitizers with lower alcohol levels are not as effective in killing germs.

Screening

The CDC recommends screening your employees by:

1. Having employees take their temperature before coming to work, or when they arrive.



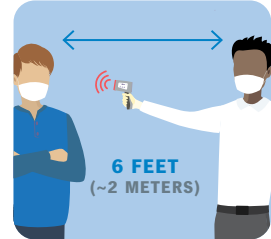
Confirming their **temperature is less than 100.4°F (38.0°C).**



Confirming they are **NOT coughing or experiencing shortness of breath.**



Looking for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks and/or fatigue.



Maintaining at least 6 feet distance between the person taking the temperature and the employee.

2. Following recommended barrier and partial controls, or using proper PPE for screeners:

- › Stand behind a physical barrier (glass or plastic partition) to protect their face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced when employees cough, sneeze or talk.
- › If no physical barrier is available, put on a facemask, eye protection (goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of your face), a single pair of disposable gloves and a gown if you expect to have extensive contact with the employee.
- › Clean your hands with either soap and water for 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- › Use a new pair of disposable gloves. If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used to screen multiple employees and you did not have physical contact with an individual, you do not need to change your gloves before the next check.
- › Look for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks or fatigue.
- › Confirm employees aren't coughing or experiencing shortness of breath.
- › Check the employee's temperature by reaching around or through an opening in the partition. (Keep your face behind the barrier at all times.)
- › If non-contact thermometers are used, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfecting.
- › Reusable thermometers must be cleaned between each check.
- › After screening the last employee, remove and discard PPE and gloves, and clean your hands with either soap and water for 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Preparing the Workplace

Employers must take appropriate precautions to reopen their business to create a safe, protected work area for employees, customers and patrons. This includes assessing exposure risk, potential exposure sources and transmission routes, and appropriate controls.



Clean and Disinfect

Plan

- › **What needs to be cleaned?**
Not all areas will need the same level of cleaning. For example, in spaces left unoccupied for 7 or more days, only routine cleaning is needed. High-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, doorknobs, elevator buttons, etc.) should be prioritized and disinfected regularly.
- › **What resources and equipment are needed?** Consider the size and availability of your current environmental services or janitorial workforce, the type and availability of cleaning products, and what personal protective equipment (PPE) is appropriate for those cleaning.

Implement

- › **Clean visibly dirty surfaces** with soap and water prior to disinfection.
- › **Use the appropriate cleaning or disinfectant product.** Use an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19, and read the label to make sure it meets your needs.
- › **Follow the directions on the label.** The label will include safety information and application instructions.
- › **Clean or replace air filters regularly** per manufacturer's instructions.

Maintain

- › **Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.** Continue or revise your plan based upon appropriate disinfectant and PPE availability. Routinely disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily.
- › **Maintain safe practices for additional layers of protection,** such as frequent handwashing, using cloth face coverings, staying home if you are sick and social distancing.

Preparing the Workplace

Distancing

The workplace we return to will need to look and feel very different than it did before COVID-19. Although we are reentering the workplace, maintaining social distance will still be important for the safety of our employees.

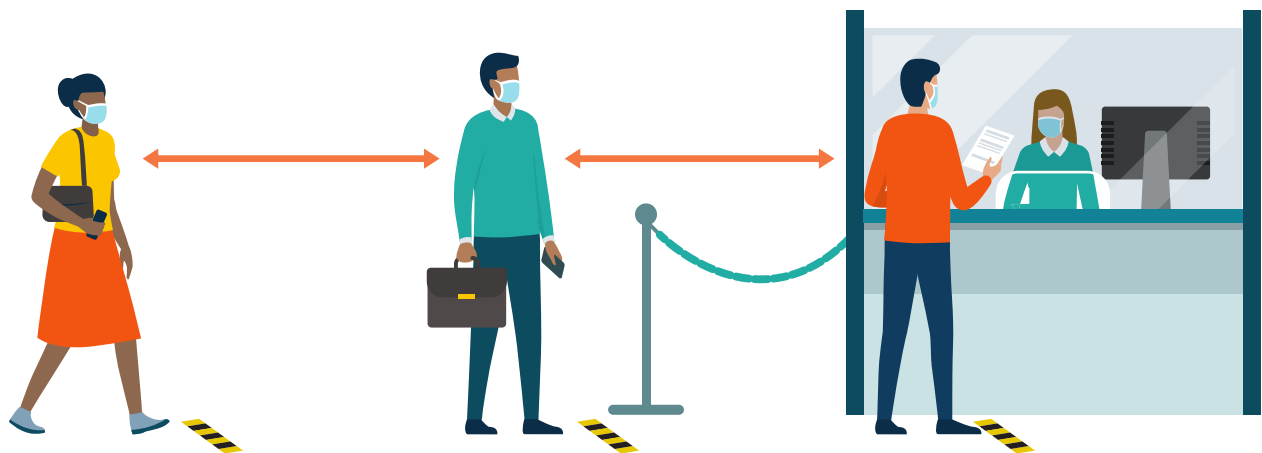
Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings. Physical distancing means maintaining distance (at least 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible. Both social and physical distancing are important precautions. Businesses should consider the following distancing strategies:

- › Set limits on how many people are in your building at one time. This may mean changing your policies to allow flexible worksites (e.g., work-from-home) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts).
- › Increase physical space between employees at the worksite. This may include:
 - Adding extra space between workspaces to ensure 6 feet of distance between workers.
 - Encouraging employees to avoid elevators.
 - Creating one-way traffic flow through aisles and hallways.
- › Altering meeting practices to phone or video rather than in-person whenever possible. When a physical meeting is required, ensure 6 feet of space between each employee, insist that all employees wear masks, and clean and disinfect meeting room surfaces.
- › Postpone non-essential travel and events.
- › Stagger break times.

S — A — F — E

SIX AWAY FROM EVERYONE

Keep 6 feet between you + others to help prevent the spread.





Communicating with Your Employees

The COVID-19 pandemic is a complex situation that requires frequent and consistent communication with all stakeholders. As reports of the illness and its toll from other nations began to surface, Cleveland Clinic leadership, along with its Corporate Communications team, began planning a coordinated response.

As employees head back to the workplace, they continue to face uncertainty that they cannot escape professionally or personally. COVID-19 is everywhere. At Cleveland Clinic, our communications approach was to demystify information and provide our caregivers with the knowledge they needed to do their jobs.

We made it a point to send at least two communications to every caregiver, every day. One includes a message from our CEO five days per week (both video and written communication); the other is a daily newsletter that is distributed at the same time each day, seven days per week. Each communication had relevant COVID-19 information they needed to know to support our accelerated response. With every message, we expressed our support and gratitude for their dedicated service to our organization and communities.

Communicating with Your Employees

As organizations begin to rethink how communications should work amid the COVID-19 pandemic, below are some of Cleveland Clinic's best practices to consider.

Plan

- › **Establish an incident command team or COVID-19 task force** that includes representatives from Corporate Communications. Meet regularly and share information that communication professionals can provide to the organization/company.
- › **Leadership involvement is a critical necessity** and should include a cadence of regular communications to all your key audiences. Communication from leadership should be planned and provide valuable, consistent information to your employees and other key stakeholders.
- › **Ensure your reactivation efforts align with your organization's values and mission** and tie them into your communications and messaging.
- › **Rethink how you work.** Do you need to consider moving from a five-day work week to a seven-day work week in your Communications department? Meet twice daily to identify needs at the beginning of the day and then wrap-up at the end of the day so everyone is aware and involved. Develop a procedure for clear hand-offs of projects at the end of each shift.
- › **Identify target audiences**, what information they need, how they will receive it and how often.
- › **Assign Communications team members to different areas** so they develop subject matter expertise and contacts within the departments with which they work.
- › **Reimagine how you communicate.** With things changing quickly, you will likely need to increase the frequency of your communications. Evaluate the tools you have in place and identify how to utilize them in this evolving pandemic.
- › **Tell your employees to be vigilant** about procedures, to peer-identify people who they see putting themselves at risk, and to take care at home to protect their families.
- › **Don't forget to tell your people how much you appreciate them.** Assure them of the continuity of your mission, vision and values.
- › **Be flexible.** An open-minded approach is essential as you rethink and reimagine the best ways to address your communication needs with employees.

Develop

- › **Develop repetitive, consistent messaging.** Ensuring that everyone understands what is happening given the speed with which it's occurring is difficult. Script important messages for different sources and echo them throughout several different communications (e.g., e-newsletters, intranet postings, phone and video meetings, conversations with managers, talking points, etc.).
- › **Customize information for each location.** Because each state/country has different restrictions in place, share the communications with local Communications teams in a customizable format.

Monitor

- › **Designate point people** in your Corporate Communications department to review all communications before they are distributed to ensure a consistent approach. Inconsistency breeds rumors and mistrust.
- › **Monitor comments** on the intranet and social media. Respond when necessary, and consult with experts as needed to dispel rumors, answer questions and address concerns.

Managing Symptoms

As your employees return to work, they may still have concerns about possible exposure to COVID-19 — and how to tell the difference between symptoms of the virus and other common illnesses. It is important to educate your employees about the symptoms of COVID-19. These resources will help you and your workers not only recognize what symptoms to look for, but how to manage any situation where they have symptoms.

What Symptoms Should I Be Watching For?

Patients with confirmed infection with COVID-19 reported these respiratory symptoms (as of May 12, 2020):



Cough



**Shortness of Breath
or Difficulty Breathing**



Fever



Chills



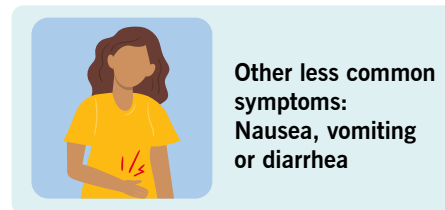
Muscle Pain



**New Loss of
Taste or Smell**



Sore Throat



**Other less common
symptoms:
Nausea, vomiting
or diarrhea**

Symptoms can range in severity from very mild to severe. In about 80% of patients, COVID-19 causes only mild symptoms. For an up-to-date list of symptoms, please consult the CDC's website.

How do I handle an employee who has symptoms or becomes ill at work?

Follow these steps if one of your employees begins having suspected COVID-19 symptoms or feels ill during the work day:

- › Immediately separate the employee who is ill from other workers, customers and visitors.
- › Send the employee home and instruct them to follow-up with a healthcare provider for appropriate testing and treatment.
- › Close off all areas that the ill employee was using.
- › Refer to the CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting your building when someone is sick.

What should I do if an employee has been exposed to someone who has COVID-19?

Follow these procedures for employees who have been exposed to someone but don't have symptoms:

- › Screen all of your employees for temperature and symptoms when they arrive at work each day.
- › Perform regular self-monitoring as outlined by your occupational health program.
- › If not already required, ensure affected employees wear face masks in the workplace for 14 days from the date of the exposure.
- › Maintain physical distance guidelines of at least 6 feet from others in the workplace.
- › Disinfect and clean works spaces, especially shared spaces and equipment.



Employee Wellbeing and Resiliency

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented event, disrupting our way of life and causing increased stress and anxiety for workers everywhere. Information is rapidly changing and can be confusing, even scary. While some workers may successfully manage their anxiety levels, the ongoing situation can be overwhelming for everyone.

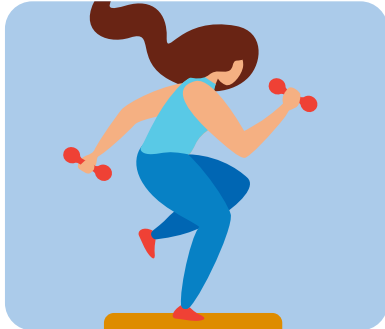
According to the CDC, stressors associated with an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- › Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- › Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- › Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- › Worsening of chronic health problems.
- › Worsening of mental health conditions.
- › Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Employee Wellbeing and Resiliency

Managing stress

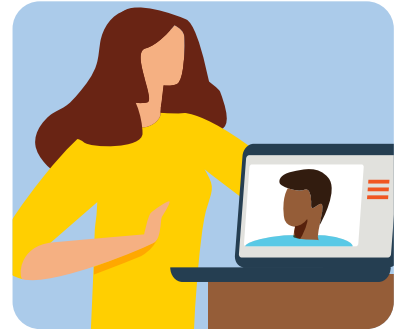
Following these steps to manage stress and add a sense of normalcy can go a long way to help you and your employees cope with the ever-changing environment and help keep those around you calm and focused. Encourage individuals who seem unable to manage the increased levels of stress and anxiety to explore available resources, such as the organization's employee assistance program (EAP).



Exercise regularly. Aerobic exercise (e.g., walking, running, hiking or playing with your kids/pets), can help release endorphins (natural substances that help you feel better and maintain a positive attitude).



Maintain a healthy diet. Stress can adversely affect your eating habits and your metabolism. The best way to combat stress or emotional eating is to be mindful of what triggers stress eating and to be ready to fight the urge.



Connect with others. Fear and isolation can lead to depression and anxiety. Reach out to family members, friends and colleagues regularly via phone, text, FaceTime or other virtual platforms.



Take a break. While it's important to stay informed of the latest news and developments, the evolving nature of the news can get overwhelming. Find a balance of exposure to news that works for you. Whenever reasonably possible, disconnect physically and mentally.



Get enough sleep. It's especially important that individuals get the recommended amount of sleep to help them stay focused on work and on managing the stress the current outbreak can bring. Experts recommend avoiding alcohol and stimulants like caffeine and nicotine before bed.

Notes

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About Cleveland Clinic

Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit, multi-specialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Cleveland Clinic was founded in 1921 by four renowned physicians with a vision of providing outstanding patient care based upon the principles of cooperation, compassion and innovation. Today, Cleveland Clinic is one of the largest and most respected hospitals in the country. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation's best hospitals in its annual "America's Best Hospitals" survey. Each year thousands of patients travel to Cleveland Clinic from every state in the nation and more than 180 countries around the world.

Cleveland Clinic has been partnering directly with employers for more than 50 years with programs focused on executive health, wellness and expert second opinions. If you are interested in learning more about Cleveland Clinic's Employer Solutions, please visit: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/departments/employer-healthcare-solutions>