

The COVID-19 pandemic is here. Citizens of the world who are not essential workers have been advised to stay at home, work from home (if possible), and leave only for emergencies, short walks, and to obtain essentials – food, medication, etc. No one knows how long the restrictions on movement outside will last, so in the meantime, here are a few suggestions that you can try to stay healthy during partial or complete isolation, and/or when you have breaks from work if you are an essential worker.

Keep hydrated - with water (preferably). Among other things, water regulates body temperature, protects body organs and tissues, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, lessens the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products, and helps to dissolve minerals and nutrients to make them accessible to the body (www.mayoclinic.org).

Maintain regular sleep patterns. Resist the urge to keep late nights because of a change in your daily routine. “Sleep plays a critical role in immune function, metabolism, memory, learning, and other vital functions” (<https://hms.harvard.edu>).

Eat well. This is not a time to binge on junk. “Like any fighting force, the immune system army marches on its stomach. Healthy immune system warriors need good, regular nourishment” (<https://hms.harvard.edu>).

Laugh. We are in a pandemic – a serious situation. There are many moments, however, when laughter can help us survive periods of anxiety, depression, and endless news loops on the pandemic. Laughter stimulates the circulatory system, increases oxygen intake into the lungs and blood, decreases blood pressure, stimulates the production of endorphins that soothe and relax the mind, relieves pain, elevates the mood, and increases the activity of immune cells - among other benefits (www.mayoclinic.org).

As far as possible, while confined to the house, **engage in hobbies** that you enjoy. You can even develop new hobbies during this period.

Remember to follow all the infection control guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Canada in order to reduce the risk of being infected by COVID-19 – handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. Please refer to the **list of reminders** sent in a previous post.

Open the windows of your home for short periods every day. Closed living spaces lead to a buildup of dust, mould, odours, and potentially toxic substances. Exposure to these and other chemicals and pollutants over a prolonged period can cause headaches, nausea, irritation of eyes, throat and skin, muscle aches, and allergy-like symptoms (www.canada.ca).

Get off the seat and on your feet! Walk in the hallway of your home or around the block (if you're asymptomatic). Exercise on the treadmill, skip, jump, do pushups. Keep moving. According to Health Canada, physical activity is one habit that ‘improves health and well-being. It reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps you maintain and achieve a healthy body weight and it improves your outlook on life’ (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>).

As far as possible **take advantage of sunny days for a boost of vitamin D.** The scientific/medical community agrees that Vitamin D is important to the health of the immune system. Because we are not exposed to much direct sunlight throughout the winter months, it may be necessary to take a supplement (prescribed by a medical practitioner).

For a few minutes, periodically every day, **walk away from the TV, phone, and social media**. No need to worry - they will be there when you return. Constant media overload and binging can weigh you down emotionally.

Play games with family members. Relax with **soothing music** of your choice. This might be a good time to dust off your musical instrument(s) and practise. These activities are therapeutic.

Time with family is precious but remember to snatch a few moments of solitude. Use these moments to focus on pleasant, positive thoughts.

Don't forget to connect with God at regular times throughout the day. He can be trusted to guide you through each moment - during and beyond the pandemic.

Be careful with the abundance of information from 'experts' who are popping up everywhere with all kinds of videos, statements, etc. Don't get sucked in because you want to get more information on the virus. Check the official sites* of trusted websites directly and use their information for facts and updates. (*World Health Organization, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Agency of Canada, Ministry of Health of Ontario, regional Public Health units).

Important MUST KNOW information

Do not open email/text messages from people posing as representatives from civil/health authorities or hospitals. They may entice you to click on links or provide information so that they can infect your system and demand huge ransom amounts before restoring it. These cybercriminals take advantage of your impulsive clicking. Never download an attachment from an email you weren't expecting. Even if the sender appears to be from a familiar organization, the email address could be spoofed. *Stop, Look, and Think. Don't be fooled.* **KnowBe4.com**

God bless you all. Stay safe and healthy.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. | Thessalonians 5:23 NLT

Presented by Health and Prayer Ministries, Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists