

# CHRONIC DISEASES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

BE PREPARED AND PLAN AHEAD

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**C**oping with emergencies is challenging in the best of situations. During the coronavirus pandemic, many of us are just trying to get by each day. For people with chronic (long-term) health conditions—like diabetes and chronic kidney disease—the challenges can be even greater. But with planning, you can prepare what you'll need to make things more manageable.

“Thankfully, people with chronic medical conditions have tools to help maintain their health, even during difficult times,” says Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers, director of NIH’s National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Managing these conditions well can help lower your risk for complications and other diseases.

Keeping on top of health problems can take extra effort during uncertain times. First, be sure to follow the CDC’s latest public health guidance <https://www.coronavirus.gov>. That awareness is especially important in a pandemic. As we’ve seen with COVID-19, information about new diseases can quickly change.

Rodgers also says it’s important to keep in touch with your health care providers. They can help you to adapt and maintain your normal disease management plans.

Be sure to eat well and safely participate in physical activity as much as possible during these difficult times. That can help you prevent or delay health problems.

Some people with chronic conditions need to follow a special nutrition plan.

For example, people with diabetes should follow a healthy eating plan prescribed for blood sugar control. Talk with your health care provider about your physical activity and eating routines.

Eating healthy and staying active can also help lower stress. Coping with uncertainty is stressful for anyone. People with health conditions may feel more stress when their normal routine and health care are disrupted.

There are many ways to lower stress and relax. Ideas include deep breathing, taking a walk, meditating, listening to music, or doing a hobby. Getting enough sleep (seven to eight hours each night) can have tremendous health benefits, including helping to reduce stress and control weight.

Your health care provider can help you find ways to lower your stress and screen for anxiety and depression. Depression is common among people with a chronic illness. And it can get in the way of managing the condition.

“Ask for help if you feel down or need help managing stress,” Rodgers says. “It’s always important to learn ways to lower stress and improve health.”

Preparing for the unexpected will help you manage a chronic health condition during a crisis. Consider packing a specialized “go-kit” for emergencies.

Maintaining your health doesn’t erase the risk for getting other diseases. But each healthy day is a day closer to better treatments for diseases.

Contact your health care provider with any questions or concerns about how to prepare for natural disasters and emergencies.

## PREPARING FOR DISASTERS WITH A CHRONIC DISEASE

Create a “go-kit” for emergencies:

- At least one week’s worth of medical supplies and equipment.
- Contact information for health care providers and emergency contacts.
- A medication list with doses and dosing schedules.
- A list of your allergies.
- Information about any medical devices you use.
- At least a three-day supply of any foods needed to manage your condition.
- Copies of your insurance card and photo ID.
- Copies of recent lab work you might need.

## MHBP RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOU

To help you get through this, MHBP is offering the following programs at no cost to you:

- 24x7 access to the Informed Health Line. Call 800-410-7778 anytime
- Health Coaching through TrestleTree. Health Coaches can discuss:
  - + Your stress symptoms and how to monitor them
  - + How stress and health are related

- + How to build a personal “toolbox” of stress management techniques
- + Where to find COVID-19 information
- + How to find good social support – even with “social distancing”

## INFORMED HEALTH® LINE — TALK TO A REGISTERED NURSE ANYTIME

With the Informed Health Line, you can speak to a registered nurse about health issues that are on your mind — whenever you need to.\*

### Plus —

- It’s toll-free. Call 800-410-7778 and select the prompt for the 24-hour nurse advice line.
- You can call as many times as you need — at no extra cost.
- Your covered family members can use it, too.

## YOU COULD SAVE TIME, MONEY AND A TRIP TO THE ER

You can turn to the Informed Health Line for helpful information — instead of an unneeded trip to the emergency room (ER). That can be a money-saver.

Plus, you’ll be able to make smarter health decisions. You’ll have reliable information you can trust — and it’s only a phone call or click away.

\*While only your doctor can diagnose, prescribe or give medical advice, the Informed Health Line nurses can provide information on more than 5,000 health topics. Contact your doctor first with any questions or concerns regarding your health care needs.

## MORE REASONS TO USE THE INFORMED HEALTH LINE

You can:

- Get information on a wide range of health and wellness topics
- Make better health care decisions

- Find out more about a medical test or procedure
- Get help preparing for a visit to your doctor
- Receive emails with links to videos that relate to your question or topic

## YOUR ONLINE SOURCE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION

Prefer to go online for health information? Check out the Informed Health Line page on your secure Aetna Member Website.

Here’s what you can do:

- Send us an email.
- Use our symptom checker.
- Learn about treatment options and health risks.
- Research a medicine, and more.

It explains things in terms that are easy to understand. And it’s easy to get to — once you’re a member, just go to **mhbp.com** and select Aetna Member Website and log in.

## TWO WAYS TO GET HEALTH INFORMATION FAST

1. Call a registered nurse anytime toll-free.
2. Visit Aetna Member Website, your secure member portal.

Get health information — when and where you need it. Put the Informed Health Line to work for you.

**Telehealth consultations are available to for the following specialties through our telehealth vendor, Teladoc®:**

- Doctors of Medicine (MD)
- Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Nutritionists
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Dermatologists

Benefits of using Teladoc:

- US board certified doctors
- Prescriptions sent to pharmacy of choice, if necessary
- No appointment necessary
- Private and secure
- Skip waiting rooms

Teladoc can be used any time, day or night. It’s perfect when your doctor’s office is closed, you’re too sick or busy to see someone in person, or even when you’re traveling. You can address most common issues such as: colds, fever, rash, ear infections, and migraines. You can also see a therapist for ongoing counseling for concerns such as: depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as a dietician for diet and nutrition help. This service is available 24/7.

You can contact Teladoc by phone, web or through the Aetna Health mobile app and receive treatment within minutes for non-emergency medical needs. For more information regarding telehealth consultations, please call 855-Teladoc (855-835-2362) or visit [teladoc.com](http://teladoc.com).

## ADDITIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TELEVIDEO SERVICES

Behavioral Health Televideo Services is a rapidly growing and evolving form of treatment. Licensed health care professionals provide services using real-time video conferencing. With this state-of-the-art communications technology, health care professionals can provide services to members who may not have been able to access services in the past. Health care professionals who provide Behavioral Health Televideo Services comply with all relevant laws in the jurisdiction where they and the member getting services are located. We expect health care professionals providing Behavioral Health Televideo Services to comply with the Clinical, Technical

and Administrative Guidelines of the American Telemedicine Association.

The following Behavioral Health Televideo Providers are available to you depending on which state you live in:

MDLIVE provides services to members in all 50 states. To register and schedule a session, call 1-855-824-2170 or go to [www.mdlive.com/BHCOMM](http://www.mdlive.com/BHCOMM).

Inpathy provides services to members who live in California, Delaware, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. The toll-free number for Inpathy is 800-442-8938.


Arcadian Telepsychiatry provides services to members who live in a state not covered by Inpathy. The toll-free number for Arcadian Telepsychiatry is 866-991-2103.

If you have any questions or would like more information about these programs, please call MHBP at 800-410-7778.

#### SOURCES:

*National Institutes of Health*  
<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/>

*MHBP.com*



## Dental and Vision Plans Available All Year!

Did you forget to enroll in a dental or vision plan during Open Season? Don't worry. You can easily enroll in MHBP Dental and Vision Plans at *any* time in the year—even if you aren't enrolled in an MHBP health plan!

#### **Our comprehensive dental benefits include:**

- Preventive Care covered 100% twice a year
- Coverage for services from basic to major
- Orthodontic benefits

#### **Our comprehensive vision benefits include:**

- Eye exam and lenses every 12 months for just \$10
- Up to \$120 for frames every 24 months or contact lenses every 12 months
- Nationwide coverage for eye exams, frames and lenses, contacts, laser vision correction discounts and more!

No matter what job you do in the service of the U.S. public, this plan is your plan.

For more information, call **800-410-7778** or visit **MHBP.com**.

**Open to Everyone**  
**MHBP**<sup>SM</sup>  
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