

Don't forget about mental health!

Are you feeling stressed, anxious or depressed? The following advice can help you to intelligently deal with events stemming from the coronavirus COVID-19 epidemic here in Québec.



KEEP TO A ROUTINE.

A routine and a stable family environment will help preserve the feeling of security, as much for you as for your children. Set up a schedule that takes account of wake time, meals, bed time, free play, structured activity and relaxation.



LISTEN.

Allow your children to express their feelings in their own words or through play. Listen to their concerns and their need for reassurance. Respond to their fears with kindness and give them even more love and attention.



BE SINCERE WHEN EXPLAINING WHAT'S GOING ON TO YOUR KIDS.

Use simple, age-appropriate words. Explain that simple hygienic measures like washing their hands often and coughing into the crook of their elbow can help protect them. Answer their questions as best you can, and when you don't know the answer, say so.



HEALTHY LIVING HABITS ARE THE WAY TO GO.

It is also important to ensure that you and your family follow healthy living habits by eating a balanced diet, drinking lots of water, staying active and trying to rest and sleep enough.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

Your children experience events through your eyes. Be attentive to their feelings, emotions and reactions. If you feel it necessary, take a few minutes off by yourself to calm down – in the bathroom, for example.



ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO MAINTAIN VIRTUAL LINKS WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.

MAKE ROOM FOR PLAYTIME AND RELAXATION.

It is so important for your children to be comforted by playing and doing activities they enjoy. Involve them in setting up the schedule and post it in on a wall or on the fridge door.

Physical activities: Dancing, obstacle courses, skipping rope, games of skill, stationary cycling, yoga, Pilates, playing in the back yard, aerobics, bodybuilding, etc.

Creative pastimes: Drawing, crafts, colouring, painting, writing, singing, origami, play dough, knitting, photography, etc.

Games: Board games, blocks, role-play, memory games, hide-and-seek, cards, and dress-up, jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku, hidden word, etc.

Entertainment: Listen to music or podcasts, watch movies and shows, TV series, etc.

Relaxation: Read a book or a story, comic book or magazine; take a warm bath, meditate and do relaxation exercises, etc.

Educational activities: Do homework, browse an educational website like ecoleouverte.ca, learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.

Other: cook, help out with the housework, sew, put things away, sort photos, etc.

What's the best way to adapt?

Most importantly, when you are in preventive isolation, take good care of yourself.

Stay in contact with your friends and family by telephone or on the Web. Speak to someone you trust or ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. It's not a sign of weakness but rather shows that you have the strength to do what is necessary to cope.

Physical activity will also help you eliminate tension and to reduce stress. Find time during the day for enjoyment. Rely on your personal strengths to get through these difficult times.

Keep in mind that by staying home you are helping to save lives. Your decision is important.

Look for signs of distress

1 PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Headache, neck tension
- Digestive problems
- Sleep problems
- Lower appetite

2 PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SIGNS

- Anxiety and insecurity
- Feeling overwhelmed by events
- A negative view of things and/or daily events
- Feeling discouraged, sad or angry

3 BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS

- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability, aggressiveness
- Inward-turning, isolation
- Increased use of alcohol, drugs and medication

Resources

If you are feeling stressed, anxious or depressed by the current epidemic in Québec, call Info-Social at **811 (option 2)**.

Telephone emergency distress and support hotlines:

- **Tel-Aide**
Centre that provides help 24/7 to people suffering from solitude, distress or who need to have someone listen:
Go to www.acetdq.org (French) for contact information on your regional listening centre.
- **Écoute Entraide**
Community organization that supports people who are emotionally suffering:
514 278-2130
or 1 855-EN LIGNE (365-4463)
- **Tel-Jeunes**
24/7 hotline for young people in need of support:
1 800 263-2266
- **LigneParents**
24/7 hotline for parents in need of support:
1 800 361-5085

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)

1877 644-4545