

Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 and Tips for Those Living with a Chronic Inflammatory Disease

Thursday, April 23, 2020



These patient advocates have been compensated by Pfizer in the past to share their stories. Some of these quotes and links also appear on [Arthritis.com](#), a resource supported by Pfizer where people living with chronic inflammatory conditions can find inspiration, lifestyle advice, tools and disease information.

The COVID-19 outbreak is impacting daily life around the world. Although questions remain as experts gather information to understand the coronavirus better, many valuable resources have already emerged – including important [updates from Pfizer](#).

While we are all hopefully practicing heightened safety measures to minimize our risk, individuals with chronic illnesses and compromised immune systems have been advised to exercise additional caution. Though this vigilance is meant to help promote physical safety, for many people — particularly those most at risk — it can also take an emotional toll in the form of fear, stress and anxiety. If the stress you're feeling is beginning to impact your daily life, it may be helpful to speak with a healthcare professional specifically about your emotional well-being.

There are also small but powerful steps you can take to check in with yourself. The following tips from the archives of [Arthritis.com](#) remind us that a little bit of self-care can go a long way.

- **Manage your energy:** With social distancing measures in place in many areas, people are spending more time at home — which may mean more work to do around the house. Remember to discuss what you can and can't do with your loved ones. For example, try doing things such as dividing up household chores, that way, you could [better manage your energy](#) throughout the day.

“Part of what's helped me is having my children help each other. It takes that burden off me.”

– Molly Schreiber, RA patient advocate

- **Carve out time for self-care:** Taking time for yourself is important — but even more so during times of crisis. It can also be especially hard during this time to [find a balance between caring for your family and caring for yourself](#). It's important to remember that however you choose to [practice self-care](#), the most crucial part is making sure you prioritize it.

“[T]he mantra I like to use when reminding myself about the importance of self-care is this one: you can't pour from an empty cup. It's not physically possible. If your cup is empty, you have no choice other than to take the time and effort to fill it up. Only after you replenish yourself can you possibly be expected to share with anyone else.”

– Mariah Leach, RA patient advocate

- **Try meditation:** Meditation is a great way to relax and reduce stress. Although it may take some time to get comfortable with the practice, there are some [techniques to try](#) that can help get you started. Getting the hang of it requires some time and patience but once you do, research shows that meditation may be beneficial for those who do it regularly.
- **Connect with others in the chronic disease community:** Leaning on others who are living with chronic conditions can be especially helpful during challenging times. Often your peers can offer advice and support for the challenges you're living with because they understand where you're coming from, and that's just one of the [benefits of joining a support group](#). It's also important to note that in today's digital world you don't even have to travel to find a support group — many local groups offer online communities!

“Advice I would give other patients would be just making sure that they find a community of other people with RA.”

– Angela Lundberg, RA patient advocate

- **When in doubt, write it out:** Sometimes, it can be overwhelming to share how you're feeling with others. When there's a lot on your mind, start by writing down what you're feeling and focusing on that emotion.

“My advice would be to speak up to find a way of communicating that works for you, works for the people around you and gets you the help that you need.”

– Dr. Matcham, postdoctoral research associate

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