



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

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Stay Connected, While Staying Apart

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This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.

Protecting ourselves and those we love by staying apart is hard. Missing social connections and being engaged physically takes a toll mentally, emotionally, and physically.

It is vital for older adults and those of any age with an underlying health conditions to stay at home and away from others right now. People age 65 and over are at higher risk for severe illness and hospitalization, especially those who also have underlying health conditions. The CDC defines those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- [People 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis

- People with liver disease

Here are some ways that all of us can continue to stay connected, while staying apart.

1. Screen time is our friend. Make it quality time to connect with family and friends. Read a book to your grandchildren over Facetime or video conference. Share a playdate with friends over Zoom.
2. Older adults may be feeling extra isolated through this pandemic. Stay in touch by calling and texting. Offer to pick-up and drop off their groceries. Maybe they are having trouble navigating technology. Offer to help. Need some tech help? Here are instructions for some of the most popular video options:
 - [An app that offers support for multiple options, tailored especially for seniors](#)
 - [FaceTime instructions](#)
 - [Zoom instructions](#)
 - [Google + Hangout instructions](#)
 - [Facebook messenger video instructions](#)
 - [Facebook Portal instructions](#)
3. Join an online exercise class. Keeping physically healthy is important and a group class can help you feel connected.
4. If you are feeling overly stressed, isolated, or anxious during this outbreak, don't hesitate to connect to a professional. To get help you may want to:
 - Call or use social media to contact a close friend or loved one — even though it may be hard to talk about your feelings.
 - Contact a minister, spiritual leader or someone in your faith community.
 - Contact your employee assistance program, if your employer has one, and get counseling or ask for a referral to a mental health professional.
 - Call your primary care provider or mental health professional to ask about appointment options to talk about your anxiety or depression and get advice and guidance. Some may provide the option of phone, video or online appointments.
 - Contact organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for help and guidance.
5. Find ways to assist your community. Offer to volunteer or donate.

This is not easy, but by staying apart we are keeping everyone safe and healthy. We will get through this together.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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