

Staying Safe While Staying Healthy: Tips for Military Families

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The Department of Defense is committed to keeping you and your family safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

During this uncertain and unpredictable time, there are ways to promote the safety, health, and well-being of yourself, your spouse or partner, and your children - even if your family unit is feeling tested or strained. Emergencies, unexpected events, and disruptions to our workplace and home can increase stress and put added pressure on our family and personal relationships. You may have increased anxiety about the health and safety of family members who are deployed, or worried about older parents who live far away.

To reduce the threat of COVID-19, we have all been asked to modify our habits and activities. If self-quarantine and social distancing have made you or your children feel anxious, stressed, or even depressed, know that you are not alone. There are practices you can take to reduce your stress, increase your safety, and still allow your connections with friends, loved ones, and your community to thrive.

Maintain your daily routine.

For the mental wellness of both you and your children, it is a good idea to stick to your usual routine as much as possible while homebound.

Going to bed and getting up in the morning at your normal time, sharing meals as a family, and sticking to an exercise regime you can do indoors or outside on your own, or **with your kids** or partner, are all ways to stay resilient. Sticking to a routine is also especially nurturing for young children.

[Learn about creating and maintaining routines »](#)

Take steps to promote child safety in the home.

If you have made the decision to self-quarantine, your family may not be used to being home together at all times.

To reduce risk of accidents or injuries to your children, take care to make sure any dangerous or potentially deadly items are safely stored, locked, and inaccessible to children. These items may include certain medications, chemical detergents or bleaches used for cleaning (for especially young children) or firearms.

[Get tips on safe firearm storage from the Defense Suicide Prevention Office »](#)

This is a new and frightening time for all of us, kids and adults alike.

There are [ways to communicate the seriousness of the pandemic to your children](#), while taking care not to alarm them. Child development experts have recommendations for how you approach this conversation with your children.

[Get recommendations for conversations about COVID-19 with your children »](#)

Remember the importance of self-care.

Taking time to create daily rituals for yourself is a vital strategy to preserve and strengthen your mental health during this challenging time.

Self-care is unique to you, whether that's a quiet bath, a jog, or even video-chatting with friends and loved ones. By making your well-being a priority, you are building the resilience you need to guide your kids and your family through this period.

[Read about the pillars of wellness »](#)

Talk to someone.

It is normal to feel scared and lonely during this time, even while at home surrounded by your children.

If you are feeling hopeless or disconnected, there are a number of options for you to speak with someone who can help. A great first step is Military OneSource, where you can speak with a confidential, non-medical counselor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Military OneSource counselors are available to talk with you about any concern, big or small, and can also connect you with other helping professionals, like the Family Advocacy Program.

[Learn more about confidential, non-medical counseling »](#)

Seek help.

If self-quarantine and social distancing have made you or your children feel less safe, know that you are not alone.

If you are quarantined with a spouse or partner who threatens, intimidates you, or makes you feel afraid, call your installation's Family Advocacy Program. Family Advocacy Program staff can help you think through ways to stay safe while staying at home, or plan to stay with a friend or family member.

[Learn more about the Family Advocacy Program »](#)

You may wish to consult the [tips from the National Domestic Violence Hotline regarding COVID-19](#), or call 800-799-7233 to speak with an advocate, or chat with someone at thehotline.org.

The coronavirus national emergency and global pandemic is causing difficulty and uncertainty for everyone. The military community will get through this challenge together, and the Department of Defense and Military OneSource are standing by to help.

Visit the Centers for Disease Control article, '[Information on COVID-19 and Pregnant Women and Children](#),' for updates.

For Department of Defense updates for the military community regarding the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Visit [Defense.gov](#)
- Follow Military OneSource's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) platforms
- Visit the [Coronavirus Information for Our Military Community page](#)

For PCS-related updates, [check Move.mil](#) »