Older Adults and COVID-19: Staying healthy during this stressful time

Older adults are more likely to react severely to COVID-19, due partly to weaker immune systems and having chronic conditions. Stay informed to stay well!

Maintain emotional well-being
- Continue to talk to family and friends who support you emotionally through telephone or Internet if you cannot see them in person
- Take a break from media, sleep well, go for a walk, and eat well

Make a plan and discuss with family and friends
- Create plans with family and friends for when you or someone you know becomes sick
- Designate an emergency contact and discuss plans with that person

Prepare in case you need to stay home
- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies for yourself and people you live with
- Have essential materials like food, toiletries, and pet food to reduce the number of trips you have to make to the stores
- Find out what you can buy online and how; ask family and friends for help if needed

Symptoms to look out for:
- If you develop these symptoms, call your doctor BEFORE going in to take a test
  - Fever, cough, or trouble breathing
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 receive medical attention immediately. These include (not a conclusive list):
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face
Some precautions you can take to protect yourself:

• Disinfect frequently used areas and objects with common household disinfectants
• Wash your hands for at least twenty seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol
• Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth
• Stay home if you start to show symptoms
• Practice physical distancing – avoid traveling into your community unless necessary
• Avoid crowds, highly populated areas and people who are sick

Only use a face mask if you are:

• Showing symptoms - this will help prevent the spread to people around you
• If you are a caretaker or healthcare worker for someone who is showing symptoms

Resources:

• Iowa’s public hotline for questions: Dial 211 or visit 211iowa.org
• University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics: for general COVID-19 information and questions, call 319-384-8829 (for those with symptoms: 319-384-9010)
• Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) COVID-19 webpage: https://idph.iowa.gov/emerging-health-issues/novel-coronavirus
• Iowa Department on Aging: https://www.iowaaging.gov/
• Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Sources:
Administration for Community Living website: https://acl.gov/COVID-19