

## Five Tips to Support Teens Health and Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Pandemic



The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought many changes to our normal lives, with families spending much more time at home and teens missing out on regular school, sporting and social activities. Without a regular routine, increased social isolation and uncertainty about the future, it's important to focus on health and wellbeing as a priority for yourself and your family, to help flourish during these difficult times. Here are our top tips to stay healthy, happy and connected:

**Eat a healthy diet.** A well-balanced diet helps provide teenagers with energy to keep active throughout the day, as well as providing nutrients to stay strong, healthy and prevent illness. Focus on eating a wide variety of healthy foods, consuming small and regular meals throughout the day, drinking plenty of water and limiting sugary or caffeinated drinks.

**Get plenty of exercise.** With restrictions and lockdowns, we may find ourselves out of our usual routine and spending much more time on the couch instead. Increased exercise has been linked to support overall health, lift moods and improve sleep patterns. Encourage your teen to aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day by doing something like taking the dog for a walk. Stuck inside? Consider finding a workout or yoga session on YouTube.

**Keep a regular routine.** One of the biggest challenges teens and families are facing, is how to manage the disruption to our normal lives. Uncertainty about the future can be difficult, so creating a regular routine can help to provide a sense of control and predictability. Encourage your teen to structure their day by showering each morning, getting dressed for the day, eating meals at regular times, limiting use of technology or devices, and going to bed at the same time each night.

**Stay connected with others.** Human beings are social creatures, however COVID-19 has meant that we are spending more time in our homes, away from family and friends. Although we may be physically distanced from others, we can still remain emotionally connected. Encourage teens to stay

in touch with others, by texting a peer, calling a loved one or catching up with a friend via video chat or while going for a walk.

**Scheduling time for things that make you feel good.** It can feel like we're in a survival mode, so it's important to take a moment to relax and do things that we enjoy. Encourage your teen to do something they enjoy every day, such as reading a book, listening to music, or playing with the dog.

And remember, we're not in a normal situation and our days may not always go to plan! It's important to take a breather every now and then, to make sure we're looking after our own health and wellbeing too.

If you or your teen are in need of support, please contact one of the following services:

- Lifeline: **13 11 14** (cost of a local call, 24 hours)
- Kids Help Line: **1800 55 1800** (free call from a land line, 24 hours)
- Suicide Call Back Service: **1300 659 467** (free call support service for people at risk of suicide, their carers and those bereaved by suicide)
- Headspace: **1800 367 968**
- Salvo Care Line (Salvation Army): **1300 36 36 22**
- SANE Helpline: **1800 18 SANE (7263)**
- Parent Line: **13 22 89**
- Suicide Prevention Foundation (24/7): **1800 HOLDON (1800 465 366)**
- Safe Steps **1800 015 188**
- 1800Respect **1800 737 732**

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