



FIRST MUTUAL  
**Wellness**  
HEALTH  
FEBRUARY 2021

**Improve  
Your Health  
in 2021...**

- **Get Sufficient Sleep**
- **Coping with the loss of a loved one**
- **Steps to take when you fall sick with COVID-19 symptoms**



# Improve Your Health in 2021

It is already the second month of the year and we trust that you have started the year well on a healthy note despite the challenges we are still facing with the COVID-19 pandemic and experiencing a variant which is more ruthless. Some of us might have lost friends and relatives, and as First Mutual Health we take this opportunity to offer our deepest condolences.

As you push towards your goals for this year, maintaining good health should be on top of the priority list. Nobody wants to fall sick because an illness is an inconvenience and an expense to almost everyone. You not only feel bad, but when you are sick, you may not be able to go to work or school, earn any money, or look after your family. You may even need someone to look after you, and you may have to pay for expensive medicines and treatment.

Prevention is better than cure is a popular adage and this is true when you consider what you eat, spend your time doing and the surroundings of your home. Some illnesses cannot be avoided. But there is much you can do to slow down or even prevent the onset of illness. Let us ponder on the following hints that you can adopt on a daily basis for healthy living:

## 1) Practice Good Hygiene

One thing the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us is that we should always wash our hands. According to the Mayo Clinic, one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness, is to wash your hands regularly. Viruses such as the Coronavirus are spread faster when one rubs their nose or their eyes with hands that have been contaminated by germs. Your best defence against such contamination is to

regularly wash your hands as standard. Good hygiene can also prevent the spread of more serious conditions, such as pneumonia and diarrheal diseases, which cause the death of over two million children under the age of five every year. Even the spread of deadly Covid-19 can be minimised by the simple habit of washing hands.

It is important to always wash your hands:

- Before and after being with someone who is sick.
- Before preparing, serving, or eating food.
- After using the toilet.
- After handling garbage.
- After changing diapers or helping a child to use the toilet.
- Before and after treating a wound or a cut.
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose.
- After touching an animal or animal waste.

How should one wash their hands properly?

1. Wet your hands in clean running water and apply soap or sanitiser.
2. Rub your hands together to make a lather, clean your nails, your thumbs, the backs of your hands, and between your fingers.
3. Keep rubbing for at least 20 seconds
4. Rinse in clean running water.
5. Dry with a clean cloth or a paper towel.

## 2) Stay Physically Active

You need regular physical activity to stay in good shape regardless of your age or gender. Many people today do not exercise enough. Staying physically active can help you to the following benefits

- Sleep well.
- Stay mobile.
- Maintain strong bones and muscles.

- Maintain or achieve a healthy weight.
- Lower your risk of suffering from depression.
- Lower your risk of premature death.
- If you do not stay physically active, you are more likely to:
  - Suffer from heart disease.
  - Suffer from type 2 diabetes.
  - Develop high blood pressure.
  - Develop high cholesterol.
  - Suffer a stroke

You might consider engaging yourself in one of the following sporting activities to keep you active; gardening, cycling, jogging, brisk walking provided you have your mask on! Aerobic exercise or even dancing are also other exercises you can do in your house.

## 3) Eat Healthy

Good health is impossible without good nutrition, and for good nutrition you need a healthy, balanced diet. You may need to consider your intake of salt, fats, and sugar, and you should watch your portion sizes. Include fruits and vegetables in your diet, and vary what you eat.

If you eat too many sugars and solid fats, you risk becoming overweight. To minimise this risk, drink water instead of sweet beverages. Eat more fruit instead of sugary desserts. Limit your intake of solid fats from such items as sausages, meat, butter, cakes, cheese, and cookies. Instead of using solid fats for cooking, you may want to use healthier oils such as olive oil. Go back to basics and include as many natural, and whole foods as possible that are in season during this time of the year.

Source: Mayo Clinic

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# Get Sufficient Sleep



## The term “beauty sleep” is literally true.

A good night's sleep is a fundamental component of maintaining good health. The amount of sleep needed varies from person to person. Most newborns sleep for 16 to 18 hours a day, toddlers about 14 hours, and pre-schoolers about 11 or 12 hours. School age children generally need at least 10 hours of sleep, adolescents possibly 9 or 10, and adults from 7 to 8 hours.

An honest self-analysis can determine if you are already in a healthy pattern or are experiencing a sleep debt. The following are signs of healthy sleep:

- Sleep comes easily without resorting to drugs or fighting restlessness or anxiety.
- You are rarely aware of waking up in the middle of the night, but if you do wake up, you can go back to sleep quickly.
- Waking up occurs naturally at approximately the same time each morning and usually without the aid of an alarm clock.
- Once you are up and going, you feel awake and alert all day.

Your sleep can be affected by realities over which you have no control such as economic conditions, the availability of resources to sustain yourself and your family, and what we are currently experiencing with this COVID-19 pandemic where everyone has been affected in some way. Getting the right amount of rest

should not be considered optional. Sufficient sleep is important for the following reasons:

- Growth and development in children and teenagers.
- Learning and retention of new information.
- Maintaining the right balance of hormones that impact metabolism and weight.
- Cardiovascular health.
- Disease prevention.

Insufficient sleep has been linked to obesity, depression, heart disease, diabetes, and tragic accidents. Surely these give us good reason to want to get sufficient rest.

### Sleep slows the aging process.

The term “beauty sleep” is literally true. Sleep slows the aging process, and some say it is one of the most important “secrets” for averting wrinkles. It is said how well a person sleeps is one of the most important predictors of how long a person will live.

### Sleep boosts the immune system.

People who sleep nine hours a night instead of seven hours have greater than normal “natural killer cell” activity. Natural killer cells destroy viruses, bacteria, and cancer cells.

### Improves memory

Your mind is surprisingly busy while you snooze. During sleep you can strengthen memories or “practice” skills learned while you were awake (it's a process called consolidation).

### You'll be more productive at work and more focused at home.

The more tired you are, the harder it is to concentrate, and distraction can take a toll on both work and your personal life. So if you want to focus, either on a job or a conversation make sure you get adequate sleep and rest.

### What to do if you realise that you have a problem of insufficient sleep?

- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day so as to establish a regular sleep rhythm.
- Make your bedroom quiet, dark, relaxing, and neither too warm nor too cold.
- Make your bed as comfortable as possible.
- Avoid heavy meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
- Take a warm bath or shower before bed.
- Do moderate exercises several times a week, but do not do strenuous exercises before bedtime.
- Be prudent and put sleep high on your list of priorities

If after applying these suggestions you still suffer from insomnia or other sleep disorders such as excessive daytime sleepiness or gasping for breath while sleeping you may want to consult a qualified health-care professional.

Source: Mayo Clinic

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# Coping with the loss of a loved one



**COVID-19** has had an impact on every aspect of our lives. Living with a pandemic in social isolation, is a new experience which has forced us to realign and deal with some aspects of our lives in a different way. Many people have lost some loved ones in this difficult period and it has been difficult grieving because people can not congregate and find solace in family and friends in the traditional ways we have been accustomed to during the grieving process. It is especially overwhelming going through a loss when one is surrounded by anxiety and fear that comes with the pandemic. Grief is a normal response to loss, especially the loss of a loved one, whether the loved one succumbed to Covid-19 or not.

People react differently to grief however; the common reactions include:

- Anger
- Periods of sadness
- Loss of sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety
- Denial
- Loneliness and a desire to spend time alone

Ways to deal with grief associated with the loss of a loved one include:

## **Embracing the grieving process**

It is important to acknowledge the loss and process of grieving. After losing a loved one, do not suppress your feelings. Find ways to express your grief, this can be taking part in some activities that bring you comfort – cooking, gardening, painting, exercise or any other creative practices that are soothing. Accomplishing a task can bring relief. Give yourself time to mourn your loss. This is a good way of starting the healing process.

## **Connect with friends and family**

Losing a loved one during the pandemic has made it harder to grieve and some people might feel like they have been deprived the opportunity to grieve. However, one can connect with friends and family virtually. A virtual funeral can ensure that family and friends have closure. Invite friends and family to a conference call and for them to share memories of the loved one.

## **Find meaning after loss**

This is an important part of the grieving process. Practice some self-care during your time of grief. Look after family and friends going through the same loss and pain. Grieving with others can decrease the feeling of solitude.

## **Ask for help**

Be patient with yourself. During your grieving process, do not be afraid to ask for help from friends and family. Seek counseling, support groups and faith-based organisations especially if they can be offered over the phone or on a virtual platform or other counselors that offer services virtually.

***“We can’t go through our lives without experiencing some loss. We need to give ourselves time and space to mourn.”***  
**Reverend Pam Lazor, chaplain in the Spiritual Care Department at Cedars-Sinai.**

## **Source**

[www.cedars-sinai.org](http://www.cedars-sinai.org)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.vitas.com](http://www.vitas.com)

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To help minimise possible exposure to COVID-19 we encourage you to make use of our digital channels for queries and payments as listed below:

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Our contact centre will be available 7 days a week from 8am to 7pm. The contact center numbers are: 08677007432 and 0242 251 440

**Claims Quotations**

Claims quotations for authorisation may be emailed to: [claims1@firstmutualhealth.co.zw](mailto:claims1@firstmutualhealth.co.zw)  
Every effort will be made to respond to the emails within an hour.

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Enquiries may also be sent to [info@firstmutualhealth.co.zw](mailto:info@firstmutualhealth.co.zw)



We can **STOP** the Corona Virus

# Steps to take when you fall sick with COVID-19 symptoms



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, or confused during a crisis. Talking to people you trust, such as friends and family, can help. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor.

If you have a fever, cough or other symptoms, you might or might not have COVID-19. Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider and it is important to keep track of your symptoms. If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19, follow the steps below to care for yourself and to help protect other people in your home and community.

## Stay home except to get medical care

- Stay at home. Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. If possible send a friend or family member to avoid spreading the virus. Do not visit public areas.
- Stay in touch with your doctor. Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other emergency warning signs, or if you think it is an emergency.
- Take care of yourself. Get rest and

stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines as prescribed by your doctor to help you feel better.

- As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a mask, maintain the stipulated distance and keep windows open to allow for fresh air circulation.
- Tell your close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 so they can take the necessary precautions. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By alerting your close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.

## Monitor your symptoms (*Symptoms of COVID-19 include*)

### Common symptoms:

- fever
- dry cough
- tiredness

### Less common symptoms:

- aches and pains
- sore throat
- diarrhoea
- headache
- loss of taste or smell

- a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department. Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

## When to seek emergency medical attention

Look for emergency warning signs\* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately.

### Serious symptoms:

- **difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **chest pain or pressure**
- **loss of speech or movement**

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

- Call ahead. Many medical visits for routine care are being postponed or conducted by phone or telemedicine.
- If you have a medical appointment that cannot be postponed, call your doctor's office, and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.

**Source: Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)**



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