



# COVID-19 and its impact on your mental health

**ASK US ANYTHING**  
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Dear Member

A pandemic is not just a medical phenomenon; it affects individuals and societies and causes disruption, anxiety, stress and stigma. The COVID-19 pandemic, now in its third wave in the country, continues to harm our mental health. Many people over the past year have lost loved ones and, in many cases, have lost jobs and subsequently their income.

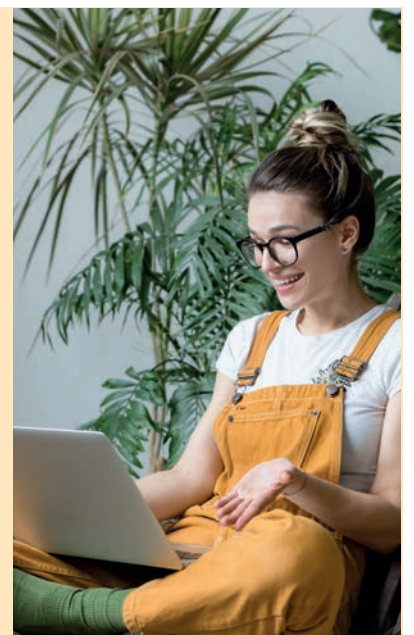
## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health refers to the cognitive, behavioural and emotional wellbeing of an individual. It's an essential component of health, necessary for us to function effectively. It helps to determine the way we handle stress and make choices. Preserving good mental health helps us balance activities, efforts and responsibilities to achieve psychological resilience and enjoy life.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH THUS FAR

One aspect that has been indirectly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is mental health. The rapid transmission of the COVID-19 virus resulted in the enforcement of more lockdowns over the past months in the country to try and curb the further spread of the disease. Isolation, social distancing, and closure of educational institutions, workplaces, and entertainment venues consigned people to stay in their homes to help break the chain of transmission. However, these restrictive measures undoubtedly have affected the social and mental health of individuals from across the board.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been seen as an additional stressor that individuals have had to face as part of their daily lives. Individuals who have previously been exposed to a traumatic event or have experienced continuous traumatic stress are particularly vulnerable to the possible development of a mental illness, related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## STEPS TO MAINTAINING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

The National Department of Health (NDoH) has outlined several different ways in which individuals can cope with the stress and mental strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These strategies attempt to minimise the effect of the pandemic on the mental wellbeing of the general public as far as possible.

- 1 Get enough sleep:** Go to bed and get up at the same times each day. Stick close to your typical schedule, even if you're staying/working from home.
- 2 Participate in regular physical activity:** Regular physical activity and exercise can help reduce anxiety and improve mood. Find an activity that includes movement, such as dance or exercise apps. Get outside in an area that makes it easy to maintain distance from people, such as a nature trail or your backyard.
- 3 Eat healthily:** Choose a well-balanced diet. Avoid loading up on junk food and refined sugar.
- 4 Relax and recharge:** Set aside time for yourself. Even a few minutes of quiet time can be refreshing and help to quiet your mind and reduce anxiety.

As people attempt to adjust to the new normal and cope with the loss of loved ones, their mental well-being has had to evolve. This evolution has had to increase the capacity individuals have to cope with multiple traumas and significant changes simultaneously. While this has happened, the occurrence of psychological distress during this evolution has been unavoidable. It is important to take care of your mental wellbeing during these uncertain times during the pandemic.

If you want more information on how to manage your mental health, follow this link:  
<http://www.medscheme.com/mental-wellness-resource-hub/>



While every effort is made to ensure that communication is aligned to the most recent guidelines and/or expert recommendations, given the rapid pace at which new evidence is being updated, we cannot guarantee the relevance of content following distribution of this communication. Updated communication will be provided on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available.

Kind regards



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