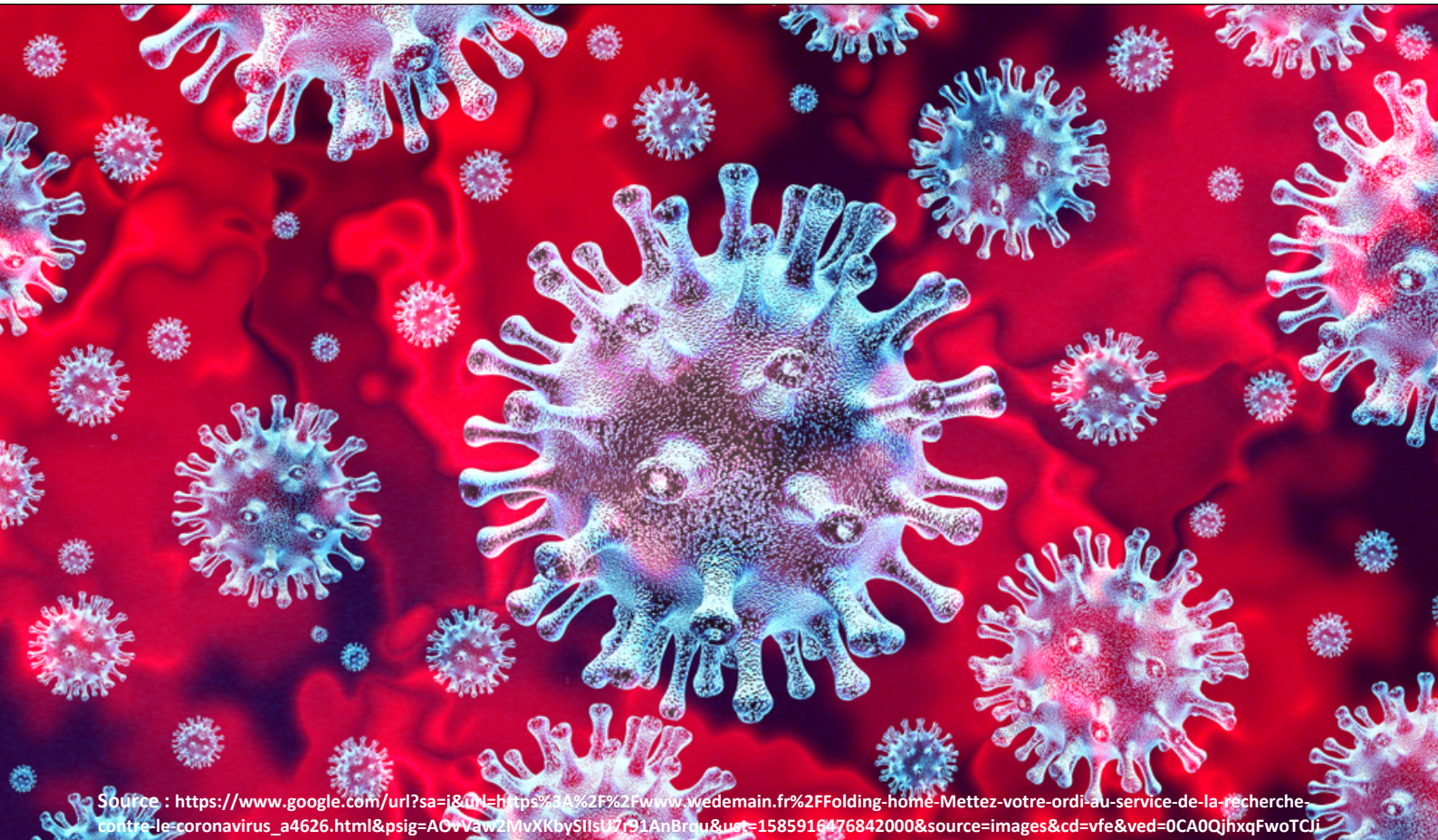


# The coronavirus...



Source : [https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wedemain.fr%2Ffolding-home-Mettez-votre-ordi-au-service-de-la-recherche-contre-le-coronavirus\\_a4626.html&psig=AOvVaw2MvXKbySllsU791AnBrou&ust=1585916476842000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA0QjhxqFwoTCJi](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wedemain.fr%2Ffolding-home-Mettez-votre-ordi-au-service-de-la-recherche-contre-le-coronavirus_a4626.html&psig=AOvVaw2MvXKbySllsU791AnBrou&ust=1585916476842000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA0QjhxqFwoTCJi)

## ... when the pandemic affects our emotions

### A short guide for nursing home professionals

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# Spend 5 minutes to take stock of how you are now

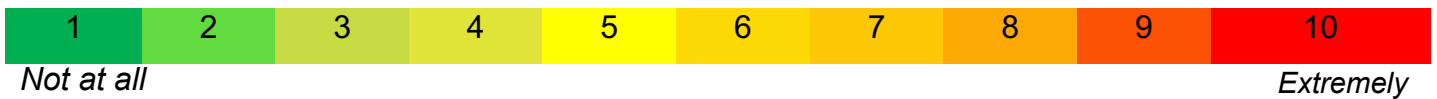
**I'm afraid of catching Covid-19**



**I'm afraid of dying from Covid-19**



**I am afraid that someone close to me may have Covid-19**



**I'm afraid of carrying Covid-19 and passing it on to a loved one**



**I'm afraid someone close to me will die from Covid-19**



**I am afraid to carry Covid-19 and pass it on to a resident**



**I'm afraid that a resident will give me Covid-19**



**I'm afraid that a colleague will transmit Covid-19 to me**



**I feel overwhelmed by the current situation**



**If the majority of your answers are towards the red:**

*Have you thought about getting closer to a support network?*

## Identify and understand your fears.

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In this particularly new situation that we are currently experiencing, it is normal to have concerns. As the psychiatrist Christophe André explains, anxiety can be seen as a real response to uncertainty. A new virus of which we do not know everything yet, an invisible transmission, people that may be infected without knowing it and without even presenting symptoms, information that changes every moment ... All these ingredients come together to feel a sense of blur, of unknown, of insecurity, and therefore increase anxiety.



However, having concerns and worries is, in fact, rather a good thing! In our story that started millions of years ago, it is fear that saved us from many dangers. Would our species have survived if the Cro-Magnon men hadn't fled a few times in front of animals much stronger than them? Or avoided eating potentially toxic plants they didn't know about? Fear allows us to become aware of danger and thus to better protect ourselves and better protect others. In this case, by adopting protective barriers and actions.

### ***"Fear saves us, panic kills us"***

Pr. Christophe Haag, HDR. Researcher in social psychology

It is when the fear becomes too intense that it becomes counterproductive. Our brain becomes paralyzed by anxiety, unable to think calmly and rationally. It is in this kind of situation that the fear can guide our decisions and behavior, sometimes at the risk of endangering ourselves and endangering others. This risk becomes especially important when we are in a group. The most contagious virus in the world... is emotion! It is therefore important to be particularly vigilant about how we feel and how it impacts the people with whom we are in daily contact.



## Coping with events

In order not to feel overwhelmed, some attitudes are to be avoided, while others should be cultivated. An optimistic but realistic attitude, a certain flexibility and the feeling of being part of the solution are, for example, elements that help. It's not about turning into Caregivers disconnected from realities, but to be able to observe them with hindsight and calm. Nor is it a question of disconnecting from one's emotions and become a kind of robot. So here are some tips to deal with our anxiety:



### Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Lack of sleep, junk food, alcohol or drug use are all elements which can worsen anxiety and to which it is important to remain vigilant. It is therefore important to keep a varied and balanced diet (without forgetting to enjoy it, of course!), ensure good sleep, and stay tuned to your body's signals.



### Continue activities that you enjoy

Even in this particular situation, or even more, it is essential to find time for positive emotions, without feeling guilty. The idea is not to deny the negative, but on the contrary, to gain the energy to face it. Reading, music, physical activity, games are all opportunities to relax and build mental strength.







## Practice soothing exercises

It is important to practice strategies that reduce stress, such as breathing exercises (like cardiac coherence), muscle relaxation or mindfulness. *[See last page for resources]*



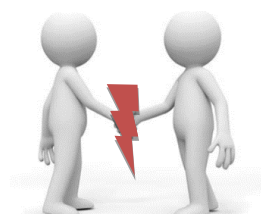
## Talk

Beyond social bonds, which are important to maintain, it is essential to be able to talk about one's worries, before reaching a breaking point. The best way for emotions to overwhelm us is to act as if they did not exist. A pressure cooker covered by a lid without any valve... ends up exploding! It is therefore essential to be able to express your concerns, either to your relatives, or to a trained professional (such as a psychologist). Several support platforms for professionals at EHPAD in France have been put in place, but please consult the "Useful Resources" at the end of this booklet.



## Take measures to stay safe

Most importantly, apply the precautions as directed by competent authorities (wearing a safety mask properly, washing hands, respect for social distance) ... It is also important to stay informed by following reliable and verified sources, while limiting viewing of news that promotes anxiety. Indeed, news channels or social networks often broadcast emotional images, which increases stress. It is therefore advisable to watch only one hour per day or less.



## Find reliable information.

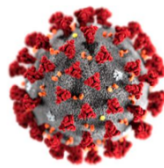
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In order to take stock of the situation, you will find below information from reliable sources (World Health Organization, Public Health France, scientific journals...).



It is essential to keep in mind that the data and information corresponds to a **specific moment and context**. The epidemic and our knowledge of these are constantly evolving, which is why the figures and information gathered cannot be taken as absolute truth but will evolve as we learn more.

- Coronaviruses are a collection of viruses, most of which cause infections and more or less severe respiratory conditions, such as SARS (acute respiratory syndrome severe). Covid-19 is the disease caused by a new form of coronavirus, discovered in China in December 2019.



- Covid-19 is mainly manifested by fever which can be very significant, a dry cough and fatigue. Sudden loss of taste and smell have also been reported in some who are infected. In older people, the presentation may be a little different, with signs like diarrhea, balance problems or sudden changes in behaviour. However, some people may be completely asymptomatic although infected with Covid-19. That is, they do not show visible signs of disease.



- Covid-19 is transmitted by droplets, such as postillions for example. The droplets are mainly expelled when we sneeze or cough. People who don't have symptoms are therefore less contagious. When we cough or we sneeze, we diffuse these droplets into the air which can then settle on people, furniture or objects which are nearby. It is when we are close to a person who coughs or sneezes, or when we touch a contaminated area and then touch our mouth, nose or eyes, that we may be infected. **Hence the importance of staying at a minimum distance of six feet, putting on a mask to avoid the transmission of droplets to other people, to wash your hands, and to avoid touching your face.** According to current studies, the virus does not stay in air and degrades after several hours depending on the surface.



- As of April 2, 2020, the number of Covid-19 cases confirmed by testing between January 21 and March 31 were 52,128. Of these people, 36,254 people had been hospitalized since the beginning of March, 3,523 had died in hospitalization and 9,444 had returned home. However, the number of infected people is probably underestimated. Indeed, screenings are not systematic and many people have no significant symptoms which do not lead them to consult. So, Health Public France via the Sentinelles network estimates between 90,607 the number of new Covid-19 patients having consulted a general practitioner between 23 and March 29.



The proportion of serious cases and complications is therefore probably lower than what the data convey. About 80% of people heal without special treatment. It is mainly the elderly or people who have other health conditions that are particularly at risk of complications. The fact that this virus is very contagious makes it dangerous. Hence the importance of good precautions, to protect the most vulnerable.



Our brains tend to pay more attention to, and to remember negative events better than positive ones. This is called negativity bias. Obviously, this phenomenon is reinforced by the catastrophic information shared in the media. So how much do you estimate the percentage of risk of being infected and dying of Covid-19 in the general population? And for people over 80?

- A study published in an international scientific journal, "The Lancet Infectious Diseases", studied the hospitalization and mortality rates of Covid-19 from thousands of cases infected in China or in other countries. By taking into account different data, and in particular the underestimation of the number of people infected, researchers estimate the risk of becoming infected AND dying of Covid-19 at 0.657% general population, all ages combined. For everyone over 80 years old, more fragile and often presenting other diseases, the risk to be infected with Covid-19 AND to die from it is 7.8% (12.08% for people over 70).



Faced with the wealth of information that is circulating, we can feel confused and overwhelmed. The figures transmitted often vary, making it difficult to navigate. Everything actually depends on what these numbers are studying. So the weekly Public Health report from France of April 2, 2020 estimated that 84% of people who died in hospital for Covid-19 were aged 70 and over. In parallel, the Lancet study estimates that 22.01% of people over 70 already infected with Covid-19 are at risk of dying. All these figures seem contradictory, and yet they are not. They don't study everything the same way.



It is therefore crucial, when we are given information, to try to understand what these numbers really mean and keep in mind that the way they are communicated to us will have a huge impact on our anxiety about this epidemic. Ask yourself how you would feel if every day you were told the number of new deaths linked to tobacco, traffic accidents, air quality, etc.

**The important thing to do today, without denying the seriousness of the pandemic we are currently experiencing, is to step back, to focus on using the best precautions, and not to forget to also take care of yourself, to be able to better take care of others. Kindness between colleagues is therefore fundamental to get through this period better together.**

## In conclusion

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- I monitor and manage my emotions. If I feel overwhelmed by anxiety or sadness, I do not hesitate to ask for help before breaking.
- I also remain alert to the emotions of my colleagues and invite them, if necessary, to take a rest and / or distance and ask for support.
- I take care of myself. Without feeling guilty. Because this is what also allows me better take care of others.
- I am alert to rumors and false information, which can quickly worsen anxiety, especially within teams. I avoid spreading them and I orient myself towards reliable sources of information, within my establishment as in the media.
- I step back and inquire seriously about the information transmitted.
- I focus my energy on what I can control (safety precautions, my activities, my emotions...) and learns to tolerate the uncertainty of elements on which I cannot act directly (the reactions of others, the existence of virus, the weather outside ...).
- I cultivate a realistic optimism, by also directing my attention to positive information and events. Because yes, they are there! Take 5 minutes at end of the day to list what brought you joy and satisfaction.

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## Useful Resources

### Support for healthcare personnel and first responders:

- The **Disaster Distress Helpline** is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Call **1-800-985-5990** or text **TalkWithUs to 66746** to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
- **Mental Health America** has Mental Health Information and Support for Frontline COVID-19 Workers at [mhanational.org/covid19/frontline-workers](https://mhanational.org/covid19/frontline-workers)
- The **Centers for Disease Control** offers Healthcare Personnel and First Responders information on “How to Cope with Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic”, and phone numbers for support, at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mental-health-healthcare.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mental-health-healthcare.html).

### Apps and exercises for relaxation and stress management:

*These apps and videos offer exercises which are not necessarily suitable for everyone. Do not hesitate to seek the advice of a health professional to support you in their use.*

- **Insight Timer:** this app has 55,000 free guided meditations and music tracks for calm and relaxation
- 5 minute **Mindful Breathing exercise:** [vimeo.com/398528899](https://vimeo.com/398528899)
- 5 minute **Cardiac Coherence exercise:** [youtu.be/-7m4pm12yxQ](https://youtu.be/-7m4pm12yxQ)

*Translated and resources selected for English speakers by Center for Applied Research in Dementia, in Solon, Ohio, USA. The original French publication is available at [www.ag-d.fr/covid-19-ressources-proposees-par-agd-actualite-5/](https://www.ag-d.fr/covid-19-ressources-proposees-par-agd-actualite-5/).*