

Stay Rested, Connected, and Informed During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Maintaining and Promoting Brain Health and Wellness

Taking care of your brain health contributes to clearer thinking and your overall well-being, especially as someone who has experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI). During the coronavirus outbreak, stressful situations and changes in your regular schedule can affect your sleep pattern and social interactions. A lack of sleep can make you feel “zoned out” during the day, because good sleep is crucial for maintaining brain health and cognitive sharpness. Staying socially connected while keeping a daily schedule will help maintain and promote brain health during these uncertain and stressful times.

SELF-HELP TIPS

Some things you can do to maintain and promote brain health include:

- Eat well-balanced meals and continue to take your medications as prescribed.
- Maintain a regular bedtime schedule and optimize sleep habits. Learn more about steps you can take for healthier sleep [here](#).
- Stay informed about current events, but take breaks from the news.
- Manage stress through meditation, family support, and recreation or hobbies.
- Participate in daily physical and cognitive exercises like puzzles or reading.
- Maintain (virtual) social connections while keeping a safe physical distance.
- Limit or restrict alcohol use. Check with your health care provider before consuming alcohol, which is often prohibited after sustaining a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

EXPLORE TBI AND SELF-HELP RESOURCES

See these resources for enhancing brain health and managing challenges related to COVID-19:

- [Case managers](#) are ready to help answer questions and provide education and support. Learn more at www.polytrauma.va.gov/system-of-care/index.asp.
- [Concussion Coach](#) is a mobile phone application and tool for assessing and managing symptoms associated with mild to moderate concussion.
- [The Polytrauma/TBI System of Care](#) website at provides information about the services and programs available for Veterans with TBI.
- [MakeTheConnection.net](#) connects Veterans with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their lives, including those that may have experienced the [effects of TBI](#). Listen to stories of hope from Veterans who have walked down to similar paths you may be facing now.
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#) connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders. Call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, text to **838255**, or chat online to receive confidential crisis intervention and support.

STAY CONNECTED

Technology has made it possible for all of us to stay connected. Seek support from your family, friends, mentors, clergy members, and people you know who are having experiences like yours. As a Veteran, your resilience and strength can also assist others during these times.

KEEP YOUR MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENTS

Learn ways to connect with VA providers:

- VA offers both [video and phone](#) telemental health options that do not require you to go to your closest facility in-person should you have a medical concern or need to follow specific physical distancing guidelines in your community.
- [Schedule or reschedule your appointment online](#). If you are requesting a new mental health appointment, please call your [local VA](#) and they will work to arrange an appointment for you. If you need same day access for mental health services, call your [local VA](#) to request this and you will be connected to care.

STAY INFORMED, STAY ENGAGED

Stay engaged with VA information as it becomes available so you can continue to maintain your mental health:

- [VA's Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) webpage](#) has the most current information and [VA's Coronavirus FAQs page](#) provides answers to many important questions.
- You can communicate with your care team, track your health information, and access your VA health records from your computer or mobile device with [My HealtheVet](#).
- [VA Video Connect](#) provides secure video visits with your VA care team from anywhere.
- [Mental Health Apps for Veterans](#) help Veterans manage feelings of stress and anxiety and also remain in contact with their VA care providers.
- [Healthy Sleep](#) at My HealtheVet provides guidance on getting the right amount of daily sleep.
- [VA's Mental Health Coronavirus Page](#) has information on maintaining your mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak.

