

Healthy Routines and Resources for Stressful Times



When life feels stressful at home and in the world, routines offer comfort that some things are normal. This is important for children. So while you may not always be able to keep to your usual routines, do them as much as you can.

Sleep

Help your child get the sleep they need with regular bedtimes and sleep routines. Keeping bedtime as it would be during more normal times can offer comfort and lead to better sleep.

Food and Meals

It can be easy to eat more than normal when stressed or at home a lot. Help your child stick to 3 meals a day and 2 snacks.

Screen Time

It is tempting to spend a lot of time watching TV or playing on computers and phones, but limit it to 2 hours most days. School or homework time does not count.

How else to keep busy? Make an activity jar! Fill a jar with slips of paper, each with an activity written on it. When your child wants an idea of what to do, pull a slip of paper out and do what it says (build something, dance around, read a book, draw, listen to music, make a card for someone, etc.).

Physical Activity

Children need active time every day, but what if you can't go places or run and play with friends? If you have internet access, check out these active videos: [Boskids.org/boks-at-home](https://www.boskids.org/boks-at-home) [GoNoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com). You can also turn on music and dance, march, jump, or anything that gets your heartrate up. And go outside! With masks, safe distancing and hand washing, it is ok to go out (unless you are sick).

Get support.

Who can you talk to for support? We all need to be able to talk about our stress and worries. A phone or video call is a way to connect if you can't be together. Who can your child talk to when they are having a hard time? A friend, relative, teacher? Reach out to them to help your child get the support they need. Your doctor is also there to support you if you or your child need help.

Do you need help getting food or housing, applying for unemployment benefits, or paying for other basic needs?

Ask your clinician if a referral to patient navigation would be right for you.

Other places to contact for help:

Food

- **Project Bread** (800) 645-8333
ProjectBread.Org/get-help
For information on pantries, school meals, WIC, SNAP.
- **The Greater Boston Food Bank: GBFB.Org/need-food**
(617) 427-5200



Lost Job/Unemployment

Call (877) 626-6800 to apply for unemployment benefits or go to the [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) website or more information.

Mental Health, Stress

Read about family mental health and how to help children with stress, depression, healthy behaviors, and more.

- [HealthyChildren.Org](https://www.HealthyChildren.Org)