

Maintaining well being at home



COVID19 - Tips for older people coping with social isolation

A Time of Uncertainty

We are aware that this is currently a very uncertain time for everyone and many of our patients have been advised to self isolate for their safety. We know this will be difficult for people and wanted to offer some suggestions of how you can maintain your well being at this time. Please be aware that government guidance is changing rapidly and you should follow this in the first instance. Only follow our tips if it is safe to do so.

Understanding and dealing with anxiety

- This is a challenging time for everyone and it is completely understandable for you to feel anxious.
- Fear can be helpful and lead us to take actions to keep us safe. However, sometimes it can be difficult to cope and think logically when our fear reaches high levels. Facts dispel fears – try to follow advice from the NHS or public health guidance rather than social media pages. If you do not have access to the internet, use the telephone numbers listed at the end of this leaflet.
- If you have noticed the news is making you feel more anxious, you may find it beneficial to limit how often you access it. Try limiting yourself to only watching the news once per day, so that you stay up to date without unduly increasing your anxiety.
- Try to focus on what you can control. We can't control what is going on now or in the future, but we can control our behaviour and the things we do.
- Taking slow, regular breaths can help you to control anxious thoughts and feelings, and make you feel calmer.
- Some people find self-help books useful; there are a wide range available so look for one that suits you.
- Go back to things you've done in the past that you found helpful to reduce anxiety. This will be different for everyone but could include gardening, exercise or telephoning a friend.

Taking care of yourself

- If you're caring for someone, please remember you won't be able to do so if you are not taking care of yourself.
- Maintain your routine as much as possible at home. This means completing self care activities such as bathing or showering even if you are not going out, so it makes your routine more 'normal'.
- Exercise is very important for our mental and physical health. If you are able to take a walk around your garden then do so. Ensure you are not sitting for long periods to maintain your strength and balance. If you are online there are useful videos on <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/preventing-falls/keeping-well/strength-and-balance-exercises>

- Try to maintain a healthy diet, with lots of fruit and vegetables. Many supermarkets now have dedicated hours for older or vulnerable people to do their shopping. If you are having difficulty getting shopping, someone in your local community may be able to help you. Third sector Dumfries and Galloway have an up to date list of people in your local community who can help with this – **0300 303 8558**
- Stay hydrated – aim to have two litres of water a day
- Try to get some time outside or in the garden (providing you are able to maintain some physical distance to others), especially when there is some sunshine.

Different Ways to Spend Your Time

We know how important stimulation is for our brains and our well being. It's important to try to keep this going as much as possible, even while at home. You could try;

- Puzzles or games.
- Reading a book you have wanted to read for a while
- Colouring books for adults or artwork
- Gardening (local garden centres are offering home delivery of plants and vegetables etc.)
- Baking and cooking –experimenting with new ideas/recipes
- Trying a new hobby or learning a new skill

Maintain social contacts over the telephone, or if you are comfortable you could use video calls. If you are not sure how to do this, now may be a good time to try it out- you could ask a friend or a family member to help you with this.

Novel ways to spend your time using the internet

- Some museums are now offering virtual tours. You can access these by searching online for www.artsandculturegoogle.com
- Many operas and theatres are available to watch online. You can search for these by visiting the website www.operavision.eu or search on www.youtube.com for 'Opera on the Sofa' or 'The London Symphony Orchestra'. The Royal Opera House is also offering ballets to view

Take some time to learn a new language: there are many online podcasts or audiobooks available to help you.

- Set up your own book or film club by organising a group or even just one friend where you arrange to watch or read something and then discuss it over the phone. If you are more comfortable online, there are some clubs available for you to access such as: www.travellingsymphony.com
- Rest! It's okay to spend some well earned time resting and watching some films you enjoy

Useful Telephone Numbers

Age UK (Scotland) offer advice and support for older people. They are also happy for you to call for a friendly chat. They can be contacted on **0800 12 44 222**, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Alzheimer's Scotland provides advice and support for those with dementia and their loved ones. They can be contacted on **0808 808 3000**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Breathing Space offer an advice and listening service if you are experiencing low mood, feeling anxious or depressed. They can be contacted on **0800 83 85 87**

Carers UK (Scotland) provide advice and support to Carers. They can be contacted on **0808 808 7777**, Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am and 4pm.

Cruse Bereavement Care offer support, advice and information to people when someone dies. They can be contacted on **0808 808 1677**, Monday and Friday 9:30am to 5pm and Tuesday to Thursday 9:30am to 8pm.

NHS Inform is Scotland's national health information service. For up to date advice on Covid 19 - Telephone: **0800 22 44 88**

The Samaritans offer support and listening to anyone that is struggling to cope or who just needs someone to listen. They can be contacted on **116 123**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Silver Line offer advice and support for older people. They also offer friendship calls via their helpline on **0800 4 70 80 90**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Local support

Dumfries and Galloway Shielding Team practical support for accessing shopping, prescriptions and other essentials for those who are shielding or in self isolation due to Covid19: **01387 260600**

Dumfries & Galloway Council: **0303 333 3000**

Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway have up to date information on local support in your community: **0300 303 8558**

Dumfries Carers Centre advice and support for anyone providing care for a family member or friend across the region: **01387 248600**

Dumfries Dementia Resource Centre advice and support for those with dementia and their families/friends: **01387 261303**

Please be aware that these organisations may to be experiencing a high level of demand at the moment so it may take a little longer to get a response.