

Stress symptoms

Many people will have symptoms of mental distress as a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is part of a normal and healthy stress response to a significant event.

Symptoms you might experience

- Bad dreams and frightening thoughts.
- Being easily startled, feeling on edge or irritable.
- Having problems sleeping.
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches or upset, sore muscles and poor appetite, awareness of your heartbeat.
- Feeling constantly tired.
- Worrying about things that could have or might happen.
- Wanting to avoid any reminders.
- Feelings such as feeling numb, detached or a bit unreal, losing interest in activities, and feeling worried and guilty.
- Reacting in ways that feel 'out of character' for you.

These symptoms are normal – they are your body preparing to respond to danger. Many of the physical symptoms are your body's reaction to the extra stress hormones.

Is this Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

No – these are normal healthy responses by your mind and body to stress.

Will these symptoms go away?

- Yes - these feelings will generally decrease over the next few days and weeks as some sense of normal life and routine returns, and most people will not have ongoing symptoms
- If you have more severe symptoms that are not going away using these measures, connect with your family practice team. There is help available for people who are suffering from more severe or longer-term symptoms.

Will medication help?

Generally, medication is not helpful and may do more harm than good in this initial period. Your doctor may prescribe something for a short period only in rare circumstances.