

Achieving Physical Distancing and Avoiding Social Isolation

Naaz Parmar MD, FRCPC Geriatric Medicine
Physician Lead Pacific Geriatricians Group
Clinical Assistant Professor UBC Faculty of Medicine

COVID-19

The province of British Columbia has declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

COVID-19 is a recently discovered strain of Coronavirus. As it is a novel coronavirus discovered in 2019 the disease it causes is called COVID-19.

The coronaviruses are a large family of virus that cause a range of disease from the common cold to severe respiratory distress.²

How do you contract COVID-19

- As per the World Health Organization (WHO)

“People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.” ²

Prevent the Spread

- Good and regular hand hygiene is paramount to prevent droplet spread. Be sure to wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds with soap.

HOW TO HANDWASH



Wet hands with warm water.



Apply soap.



Lather soap and rub hands palm to palm.



Rub in between and around fingers.

Lather hands for a total of 30 seconds



Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.



Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.



Rinse thoroughly under running water.



Pat hands dry with paper towel.



Turn off water using paper towel.



Your hands are now safe.



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Prevent the Spread

- Social distancing, or more accurately physical distancing, is crucial for minimizing an individual's risk of contracting COVID-19 and containing the pandemic in the general population.
- Physical distancing involves maintaining at least 2 metres between individuals to minimize the risk of droplet transmission.

Physical Distancing vs. Social Isolation

- It is important to note that physical distancing does not mean social isolation. There are many ways to remain connected.
- Social isolation is of particular concern in the elderly. Humans are by nature social or tribal beings, a loss of community can leave seniors vulnerable to many poor health outcomes

Effects of Isolation

- Social isolation in the elderly can lead to:
 - Decreased memory and cognition
 - Depression and or Anxiety
 - Heart disease
 - High blood pressure
 - Obesity
 - Mortality ³

How to combat social isolation while achieving physical distancing

- Preventing social isolation is a multifactorial approach including focusing on mentally stimulating activities, physical exercise, nutrition and sleep.

Routines

- The most important aspect of avoiding isolation with physical distancing is to maintain a routine as similar to your usual days as you can. Physical distancing will demand some creativity but routines can be followed safely.
- Keep your sleep pattern, meals, medications and physical exercise as close to your usual pattern as possible.



Find your network

- Physical distancing does not mean that you have to isolate from friends, family or neighbours.
 - Make a list of loved ones you would like to connect with. In your calendar plan a different friend or family member to call each day. Make it a point to call, email or text someone each day even if it is the same person.

Find your network

- If you see your neighbour out and about strike up a conversation while still maintaining distance.
- If you're unable to create a list, reach out to other services and supports through the Parkinson's Society, your local community centre or other group you may be interested in.



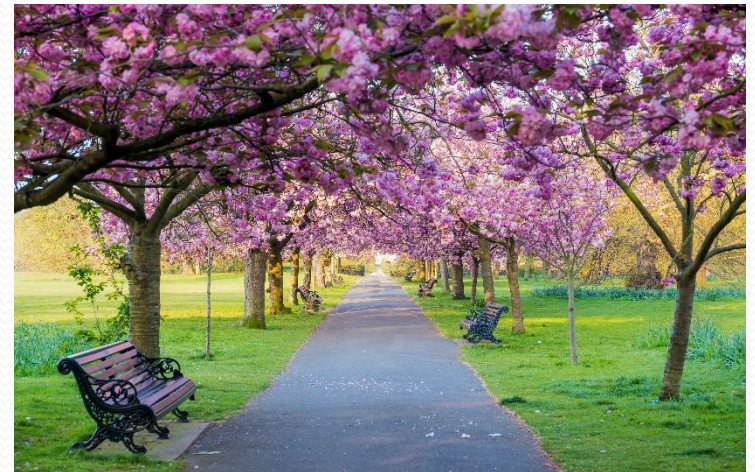


Find Mentally Stimulating Activities

- Physical distancing will make many social activities challenging but not impossible. Start by making a list of hobbies you enjoy, no matter how involved or simple they are.

Find Mentally Stimulating Activities

- Do you enjoy crafting, photography, reading or have a favourite genre of TV show. No matter how involved or simple add them to the list
- Review your list so see which activities you can still do while physically distancing. Are there any similar activities you haven't done but work well with physical distancing

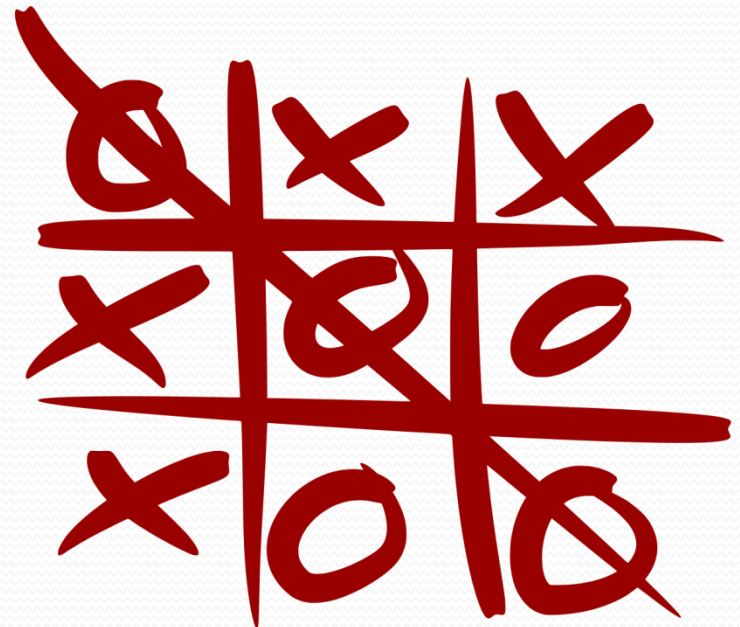


Find Mentally Stimulating Activities

- Technology allows us to connect without physical closeness. Telephone calls, text messages, video calling with apps on phones or computers and emails all keep us connected. Try connecting virtually with mentally stimulating activities.

Find Mentally Stimulating Activities

- Plan to watch a film the same time as a loved one then call them immediately after to discuss it
- Start a book club virtually
- Play games virtually such as X's and O's, Battleship or Chess



Find Mentally Stimulating Activities

- Focus on variety.
 - Avoid doing the same activity each day or all day. Watch the news if you are interested but do not leave the news cycle on all day. Flip over to another type of program, turn on the radio or music station instead, pick up a book or magazine, flip through the flyers in the mail.



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Physical Activity

Maintaining physical activity is crucial in avoiding social isolation for many reasons. Physical activity helps to anchor a routine, maintains sleep patterns, maintains mood and most importantly in the elderly prevents deconditioning.

Inactivity leads to loss of muscle mass which leaves seniors vulnerable to balance concerns, falls and fractures.

Physical Activity

- Physical Activity should be a part of the daily schedule.
 - Try to find the time of day when you feel most energized and schedule your exercise time then
 - Try for a balance of resistance exercises and cardiovascular exercise
 - As with mentally stimulating exercises try for variety to keep you engaged

Physical Activity

- Resistance exercises are effective in maintaining and improving balance and falls risk. In most cases they do not require equipment as using your own body weight is sufficient.

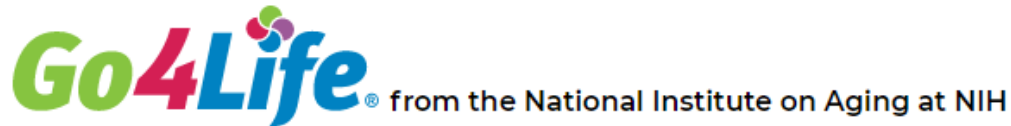
Physical Activity

- Examples of home based resistance training includes
 - Strategies and Actions for Independent Living ⁴ (SAIL) exercises which offer three different levels of exercises targeted for those that exercise while seated, standing or with motion.
 - Hand outs are available through their website as are videos. These resources are available in multiple languages.



Physical Exercise

- The National Institute for Healthy Aging also has examples of exercise programs that can be done at home. ⁵



[How Exercise Helps](#)

[Try These Exercises](#)

[See Workout Videos](#)

[Fr](#)

4 Types of Exercise

Exercise and physical activity fall into four basic categories—[endurance](#), [strength](#), [balance](#), and [flexibility](#). Most people tend to focus on one activity or type of exercise and think they're doing enough. Each type is different, though. Doing them all will give you more benefits. Mixing it up also helps to reduce boredom and cut your risk of injury.

Physical Exercise

- Classes such as Tai Chi and OsteoFit are great ways to improve balance and prevent falls. They are available as online videos on YouTube that you can follow along.
- Exercises that focus on stretching, such as Yoga are not beneficial for falls and fracture prevention. They can be helpful for meditation, mindfulness and stretching but it is important to also do resistance training at the same time.

Physical Exercise

- Walking is an excellent resistance exercise as well. During physical isolation you can still go for a walk so long as you are mindful of keeping 2metres apart from others.
- You can go for a walk outside, in your backyard or if you live in a condominium try walking in the hallways of your building but maintaining distance from others. Hand hygiene is of course important whenever returning home.

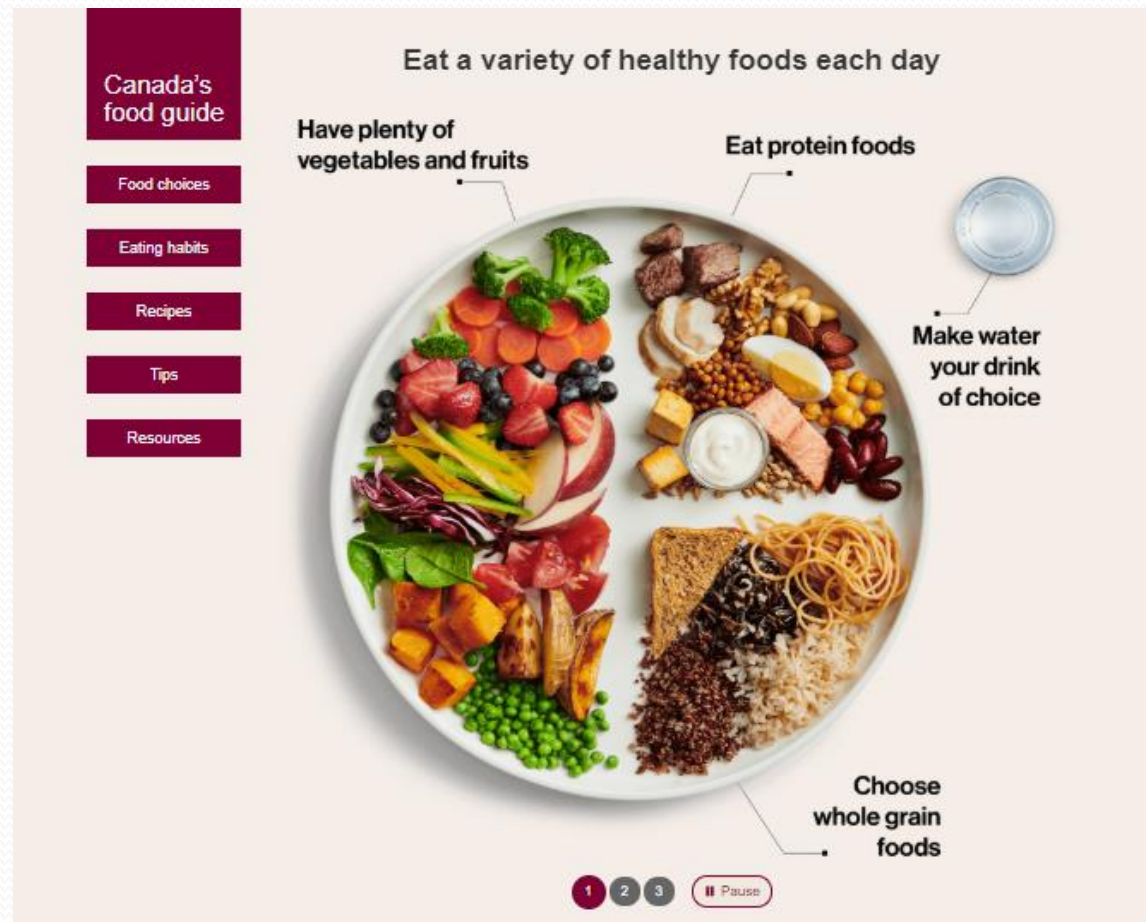
Physical Activity

- Try to target at least 20 minutes of physical activity daily
- If you are having trouble getting motivated, reward yourself for exercising by marking it off on your calendar or enjoying a treat of some sort.
- If you don't like spending consecutive time exercising you can break it up. For example you can do exercise during the commercial breaks of a TV show

Nutrition

- During physical isolation it is easy to focus too much on meals as they are the only real sign posts of the day. One can indulge too much or become too strict with a diet when overly focused on meals. Avoid the pitfalls of both and try to maintain moderation and balance.
- Follow the Canada Food Guide as best you can based upon your personal health needs. ⁶

Nutrition



Sleep

- Maintaining a regular sleep schedule is important in avoiding the pitfalls of social isolation. Sleep hygiene is part of this.



Sleep

Sleep Hygiene recommendations from the Centre for Disease Control ⁶

Tips for Better Sleep

Good sleep habits (sometimes referred to as “sleep hygiene”) can help you get a good night’s sleep.

Some habits that can improve your sleep health:

- Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing, and at a comfortable temperature
- Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smart phones, from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.



Ask for Help

- Combating social isolation while maintaining physical distancing is a novel thing for all of us. It cannot be achieved alone.
- Talk about your frustrations with the situation with your family and friends.

Ask for Help

- If you find that anxiety, low mood or sleep have become a concern please contact your family physician. Virtual medical care is still available through most physicians offices.
- Remember that though we are asked to stay apart, none of us are alone

Key Points

- COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that causes respiratory symptoms and is transmitted through droplets
- Physical distancing is crucial to protect the individual and control the pandemic
- Physical distancing is not the same as social distancing
- Social isolation has negative effects on health especially in the elderly
- Maintaining a routine including mentally stimulating activities, physical exercise, nutrition and sleep is crucial to prevent social isolation.
- Support and help is available during this time. Though we are apart we are not alone.

References

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