

February 2023 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

Self-Care Practices to Stay Safe

Self-care is the first step to keeping yourself safe. Until you feel safe it is hard to help others be safe.

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. Even small acts of self-care in your daily life can have a big impact.

The National Institutes of Health provides the following guidance relating to Self-Care.

For physical health, many of us follow these basics.

- **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so do not be discouraged if you cannot do 30 minutes at one time.
- **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.** A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks or coffee.
- **Make sleep a priority.** Stick to a schedule, and make sure you are getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.
- **Seek and Follow Medical advice.** This includes scheduling regular medical visits and following treatment plans for current ailments or diseases.

Mental health self-care can help manage stress, lower risk of illness, and increase your energy. Here are some tips to help you get started with mental health self-care:

- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must be done now and what can wait. Learn to say “no” to new tasks if you start to feel like you’re taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Practice gratitude.** Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night or replay them in your mind.
- **Focus on positivity.** Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- **Stay connected.** Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy. For other ideas for healthy practices for your body, mind, surroundings, and relationships, see the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) Wellness Toolkits](#).

Have a **SAFE** and Healthy New Year!

THINK SMART, BE AWARE, BE FLEXIBLE, BE EDUCATED (SAFE)