

Self-care for doctors in a COVID world

Five Principles

Preparation

- Optimise your immune system by avoiding fatigue and sleep deprivation, alcohol and smoking.
- Come to work fully rested and adequately hydrated.
- Ensure your diet has plenty of fruit and vegetables and add a supplement of oral vitamin C (250mg) and zinc (25mg) on a daily basis. Eat modest amounts of really good food.
- Walk, exercise to around 2.5 hours each week. Don't overdo it and avoid it late in the evening.
- Maintain your non-medical interests and pursuits when away from work. These are invigorating.

Protection

- PPE is good for you. Doctors work in risky work environments. Use PPE.
- Aim for best-practice at work - frequent handwashing and make full use of gloves and masks.
- Insist on good signage and staff training at work to protect your key personnel at work.
- Carry disposable gloves to wear when not at work such as when using public transport, shopping or public bathroom facilities. Avoid sick people when not at work.
- Avoid stress emanating from COVID news overload and excessive exposure to early morning and late evening news.
- Ensure you are fully immunised against influenza.

Professionalism

- Remain well-informed, using a reliable single source of information
- Maintain a calm and consistently positive manner, whilst leading by example with handwashing and using PPE.
- Avoid endorsing unqualified sources of COVID information.
- Do not go to work if unwell. Support colleagues who are unwell and are not at work.

Promotion

- Encourage your colleagues to consistently aim for best practice.
- Role model for others, especially staff, students and patients.
- Remind all staff and colleagues at every opportunity of the standard expected.

Pathway of care (for yourself or a colleague)

- Seek the formal care from your own GP where possible. We encourage this strongly.
- If you do not have your own GP, www.doctorshealthnt.com.au offers the following alternatives if you are concerned:
 - 24/7 phone advisory service (08) 8366 0250 to speak with an experienced colleague
 - Telemedicine consultations – details here <http://doctorshealthnt.com.au/telemedicine>
- There is a dedicated COVID-19 hotline number for the NT for people who need to arrange testing only - 1800 008 002. If you live in Darwin and need to arrange testing, please call the Public Health Unit on 8922 8044. Website <https://secure.nt.gov.au/alerts/coronavirus-covid-19-updates>
- National hotline Coronavirus Health Information Phone Line is 1800 020 080.
- Link to self-care information for health workers [here](#).
- Looking after your mental health beyondblue resources - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>