

# LESSONS FROM MILITARY CAREGIVERS AMID CORONAVIRUS

→ *Caregiver Tips from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation*



- **Embrace the ambiguity** – acknowledge the “not knowing” and hold on to what you do know.
- There are ways to mitigate our risk, and we need to respect the fact that high-risk people will require **extra vigilance**.
- It's not a crime to **take care of yourself** – make popcorn and turn on Netflix, and turn off your phone.
- This is a great time for people to **reconnect** with their families. You can video-chat with loved ones, play board games, organize the family photos that are on your laptop, hold a movie night.
- Humans crave **routine**, so if life was just disrupted, be sure to establish a new pattern at home that creates familiarity.
- Take care of your mental health, and **limit your time on social media**. Recognize the things that cause anxiety and angst and eliminate them.
- Seek out information from **reliable sources** like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, AARP and local government sites. Always look for a source link back to an official site and click on it.
- **Be proactive** with your health care providers and ask how you can interact with them during this period of social distancing and quarantine.
- Take advantage of **telehealth** opportunities. People communicate with health care providers in different ways, and many offer the chance to connect through apps, websites, chat and texting. Physical therapy instructions, for example, can be sent via email or shown in videos online.
- We always feel better when we **help other people**. Find small ways to reach out, call old friends, join an email “help” list in the neighborhood or pick up items for homebound residents and leave them outside their door.
- “Adopt” a family in the community. If someone is facing challenges, **reach out** proactively by phone or email.
- Feeling prepared lowers stress. Think ahead in two-week increments. Plan for excursions and supplies, and don't look beyond that. **Envision the future in bite-size**, digestible chunks.
- **Mindfulness** and guided-imagery practices can be conducted at home, without a professional. There are many places online (such as [aarp.org](http://aarp.org)) to find information about alternative medicine and therapies.

**Full article by Lee Woodruff, AARP: [bit.ly/aarpcgcovid](https://bit.ly/aarpcgcovid)**