



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Safe and Healthy Buckeyes

## Student Health and Well-Being Strategies and Resources

Returning to campus may be stressful for students. The safety of our Ohio State community is and always will be the university's first priority. This document contains research-based intervention strategies and resources that can help build resiliency and enhance mental, emotional and physical health and well-being.

First and foremost, everyone on all campuses will participate in protective practices. Every individual has a role in keeping the community safe.

### Help Prevent the Spread of Infection

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently especially after touching common surfaces. If soap and water are not available, 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be used.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from other individuals.
- Wear a face mask in all indoor public spaces on campus.
- If you are exposed or have a confirmed case of COVID-19, you will be required to quarantine or isolate until you are healthy.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

### COVID-19 Coping Resources

Resources to help cope with COVID-19 can be found at: <https://wellness.osu.edu/covid-19-resources/wellness-tips>  
<https://ccs.osu.edu/ccs-covid-19-updates/for-students/>  
<https://studentlife.osu.edu/articles/we-are-here-for-you>

For more well-being resources, download the Ohio State: Wellness app, available for Android and iPhone in the app store. <https://it.osu.edu/ohio-state-app-suite#ohio-state-wellness-app>

For information about the university's wellness resources, see: <https://wellness.osu.edu>

## Strategies to Build Resiliency and Reduce Stress

You are not alone if you are experiencing stress and anxiety. There are steps you can take to avoid letting these feelings become overwhelming or interfere with your concentration or functioning.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from difficulty and grow through life's challenges. The following practices may help you reduce your stress by building your resiliency and coping skills.

- *Mental Health Strategies Series*: Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service staff present effective strategies for managing mental health. Watch the entire playlist, or choose a topic specific to your needs, and add these important skills to your mental health toolbox. Watch the video series at <https://ccs.osu.edu/mental-health-strategies-video-series/>.
- *Emotional Fitness*: Read CCS psychiatrist Dr. Ryan Patel's blog on emotional fitness. Topics include happiness, success and brain health for college and beyond with practical ideas from emerging evidence. <https://u.osu.edu/emotionalfitness/>
- *Gratitude*: Name or write down three people or things for which you are grateful every morning.
- *Deep abdominal breathing*: Take deep abdominal breaths throughout the day using the 4-7-8 method – breathe in counting to 4, hold for 7 seconds, and breathe out for a total of 8 counts.
  - Additional information on breathing practices can be found here <https://u.osu.edu/smartlab/breathing-to-reduce-stress/>
- *Mindfulness*: Stay in the present moment to worry less and feel less guilt.
  - For mindfulness programming, visit <https://u.osu.edu/smartlab/meditation-to-reduce-stress/>
- *Read*: Spend five minutes with a positive book every morning and night.
- *Monitor your thinking*: When experiencing a change in stress level or mood, ask yourself "What was I just thinking?" Chances are it was a negative thought that needs to be turned around to a positive. How we think affects how we feel and how we behave. To learn cognitive-behavioral skills, the first-line evidence-based treatment for mild to moderate stress, anxiety and depression, visit <https://nursing.osu.edu/offices-and-initiatives/mindstrong>
- *Stay connected* to others.
- *Limit negative media coverage*: You can keep up on accurate information related to the pandemic at reliable websites such as
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home>
  - <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/features/coronavirus>
- *Make an appointment* with a Student Wellness Center Wellness Coach who can help you to reduce stress and build resiliency. Visit [www.go.osu.edu/wellnesscoaching](http://www.go.osu.edu/wellnesscoaching) to schedule.

- Assess your resiliency and learn more about how to build your resilience at <https://www.everydayhealth.com/wellness/state-of-resilience/>. Research findings show that people who have high levels of resilience have fewer physical and mental health problems, so taking the time to build and practice resiliency skills can yield many positive health benefits.

### **Tips to Stay in Optimal Health**

Half of the people living in the United States have a chronic disease, yet research suggests that many chronic diseases can be prevented with healthy lifestyle behaviors. Engaging in these behaviors also can boost your immune system and help your body prevent and fight infection.

- Engage in 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week (even 11 minutes of activity a day has positive effects).
- Beware of the chair: Too much sitting increases cardiovascular risk and zaps your energy. Aim to stand and move for at least 10 minutes every hour.
- Eat at least five servings of fruits/vegetables each day.
- Sleep at least seven hours a night; consistency in going to bed and waking up at the same time every day helps, even on the weekends.
- Practice daily stress-reduction activities.

Ohio State has multiple educational and skills-building opportunities and services that can help you to stay physically and emotionally well. See the following:

- <https://wellness.osu.edu>
- <https://recsports.osu.edu>
- [www.go.osu.edu/nutritioncoaching](http://www.go.osu.edu/nutritioncoaching)
- [www.go.osu.edu/screening](http://www.go.osu.edu/screening)
- [dining@osu.edu/nutrition](mailto:dining@osu.edu/nutrition)

### **Mental Health Support**

- Anxiety affects people in multiple ways, including:
- subjective feelings of irritability, helplessness, anger, decreased motivation or fear
- cognitive changes such as confusion, difficulty making decisions and/or concentrating
- physiological changes such as increased heart rate, respirations and/or blood pressure, muscle tension, headaches or GI upset
- behaviorally, in such forms as nervous tapping or restlessness

Symptoms of depression include:

- sadness
- fatigue
- withdrawal
- loss of pleasure or interest in activities

- decrease or increase in sleep or appetite
- frequent headaches or body aches
- anger/irritability

In the context of COVID-19 there will be challenges to life on campus in addition to typical day-to-day stress. It is totally normal and expected that you may experience anxiety or mood fluctuations while dealing with the uncertainty we all are facing. You may notice:

- Changes to sleep, appetite, or energy level
- Feelings of loss related to missed events or gatherings
- Sense of being disconnected from others
- Difficulty focusing
- Fear and uncertainty about the future
- Trouble completing academic work or other responsibilities

If you are experiencing these or other difficulties, especially when they get in the way of your ability to reach your goals, there are several ways to find support. A full listing of support resources for students can be found at: <https://ccs.osu.edu/mental-health-support-options/>

If you have thoughts of suicide, **call 911** or contact the national suicidal prevention lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**.

REACH is a suicide prevention training program offered to Ohio State students, faculty and staff to learn the risks, warning signs, and how to intervene to prevent suicide. More information: <https://suicideprevention.osu.edu/>

Some people deal with depression and anxiety by attempting to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. If you need help with your use of alcohol or drugs, you can contact <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/mental-behavioral/addiction-drugs>

Remember, exercise also can be helpful in decreasing depression and anxiety. Student Life Recreational Sports offers a wide variety of programs both in person and virtual for helping you stay physically active including group fitness classes. You can learn more at [recsports.osu.edu](https://recsports.osu.edu).

## **Dealing with Grief**

It is normal to grieve the loss of what we had or the life we knew before the pandemic. You also may be dealing with the loss of someone as a result of COVID-19. Any type of loss can trigger grief.

Signs of coping with grief as a result of the pandemic might include:

- trouble concentrating
- challenges with completing simple tasks
- fatigue

- anger or irritability
- sleeping too much or less than usual
- engaging in activities such as over-eating, online shopping, or using alcohol or drugs to cope with stress or anxiety
- avoiding thinking or talking about the pandemic

Stages of grief involve denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. These do not necessarily follow a linear process. You may feel better if you reach out to others for support and share how you are feeling. A full listing of support resources for students can be found at: <https://ccs.osu.edu/mental-health-support-options/>

## Financial Wellness

Financial wellness is an important part of your overall health and well-being. Managing your finances well can help you to reduce stress, achieve your goals and plan for any unforeseen circumstances. The following resources can help.

- *Financial Coaching*: [Financial coaches](#) can help you with financial goal-setting, banking basics, budgeting, credit education, debt repayment education, saving and retirement education, and more.
- *iGrad*: This online interactive [financial literacy tool](#) for students covers money management, loans and navigating life after graduation.
- *iTunes U Course*: [Student Personal Finance 101](#) is an iTunes U course designed by the Student Life Student Wellness Center to make personal finance fun and engaging for all students.
- *Personal Finance Video Series*: This course provides you with the basics of personal finance, including topics like budgeting and savings planning, and more technical aspects of student loans and credit scores. Learn more: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNrezEBXau4Cy8wzGDR\\_bEvjGixaVWujB](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNrezEBXau4Cy8wzGDR_bEvjGixaVWujB)

## Maintaining School-Life Balance

Balancing school and life during this time can be especially challenging. You are relating to people in a different way and may be relying on technology even more than before the pandemic. Try your best to schedule a few “recovery breaks” from technology during the day when you can practice mindfulness or take a brisk walk. Even five- to 10-minute recovery breaks during the day have wonderful benefits. Learn more about technology impacts on your well-being by visiting <https://u.osu.edu/studentwellnesscenter/2020/04/13/improve-your-digital-wellness/>.

Looking for some programs to help with your well-being? Visit <https://studentlife.osu.edu/articles/bucks-be-well>

**Need to talk?** The Buckeye Peer Access Line (PAL) is a non-emergency talk line that provides a space for students to engage in brief phone conversations in order to gain support and learn about campus resources. Learn more at [go.osu.edu/BuckeyePAL](https://go.osu.edu/BuckeyePAL).

## **Guidance for Parents**

If you are a parent...

- Ask your children “What do you know about the coronavirus and what is worrying you?” Help them share their feelings.
- Keep information appropriate for the child’s age and development.
- Answer questions honestly and simply.
- Avoid frightening images.
- Provide reassurance that children are safe and that doctors, nurses and leaders are doing everything they can to prevent the spread of the virus and to get people better.
- Watch for signs of anxiety and depression, and reach out to your child’s primary care provider if symptoms are causing distress or interfering with functioning.
- Serve as a role model and teach healthy coping strategies; remember physical activity helps to keep them active and relieve stress.
- Remember that even though you are a parent who is supporting your children, the coronavirus and its wide-ranging effects also impact you. Keep in mind your own needs while supporting your children.

Visit <https://wellness.osu.edu/story/children-covid-19> for more information and a recorded webinar on the topic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWydt6bsP0U>

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