

TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic - 100 Old Billerica Rd., Bedford, MA 01730

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Well-Being During a Pandemic

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It is hard to believe that at the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, spring had barely shown its face and now, a long 15 weeks later, we are in the full swing of summer. Warmer temperatures and endless hours of daylight have certainly brightened our spirits, allowing for long walks in the fresh air, watching the garden bloom, and eating all the fresh fruit we can find. The reality of the pandemic has also sunk in, however, and we must mourn the losses of this season, both big and small. This summer will look very different from any other, with canceled vacations and family celebrations, friendships limited to distanced visits and phone calls, and working hard to find joy in the little things at home and in our own backyards. We must also mourn the devastating loss of life both here in our community and in the greater world. While daily life will be different for some time to come, there are several ways in which we can maintain our health and well-being and enjoy this season we are in.

Maintaining Social Connections

Staying connected with family and friends is more important than ever. The safest way to connect remains via distanced modalities such as phone and email. If you have access to video call technology such as Facetime, Zoom or Skype, mastering these forms of communication can enrich your interactions tremendously. Meeting with friends and family over video for game nights or book club discussions can provide a semblance of purpose and normalcy that may be lacking during these times.



The warm weather has made outdoor, socially distanced visits possible and it is wonderful to see

the faces of family and friends in person but is important to keep several guidelines in mind. To minimize risk of contracting the virus, all visits should be outdoors with a very small group (2-4 people seems ideal). Each person should maintain at least 6 feet of distance from all others and wear a mask for the duration of the visit. Avoiding food and drink allows everyone to maintain mask wearing and avoid face touching.

Fresh air and Exercise

Getting outdoors daily is important for physical health and is a tremendous boost to mental health and well-being. Outdoor exercise in the heat of the summer is not possible for all but sitting in a shady spot with a book and a cold drink can also do wonders for the spirit. It is important to remember that the risks of summer weather exist even in pandemic times. Exercising in the cooler morning and evening hours and avoiding the hottest temperatures of the day is safest. Wear sunscreen and a hat for sun protection and bug spray or long pants to decrease risks of tick and mosquito bites.



Medical Care

The world came to a halt in mid-March and routine medical care was delayed for many of us. Now that Massachusetts has gained significant control over virus transmission, the medical community is shifting toward providing more in-person care, while also continuing telemedicine when appropriate. It is very important to connect with your primary care provider at this time to determine which routine and preventative medical care you should seek out, such as cancer screenings, and what can continue to wait. Additionally, urgent and emergency medical problems do not stop in the face of a pandemic;

never put off seeking care if an emergency arises. The medical community is prepared to care for all patients and to limit risk of coronavirus when you do receive care.

Engage Your Mind

More time at home without social interactions can certainly be isolating and lonely. Many of us have faced restlessness and boredom as we adjust to this new season. Taking up a new hobby is an excellent way to embrace newfound free time and to keep the mind and spirit stimulated. Some may feel fatigued or overwhelmed by the current state of the world and a new hobby feels daunting. Instead, it may be beneficial to lean into re-reading favorite books or watching old movies, mastering a hobby you have had for years, such as gardening or knitting, and connecting with friends and family via phone and email on a predictable schedule.



Preparing for Fall and Winter

There is no doubt that we will be contending with the risks of coronavirus through the fall and winter seasons (though we can remain optimistic about a vaccine and treatments becoming available next year). Preparing for colder



weather now will make that challenging time more enjoyable and fulfilling. Take inventory of your home and identify areas that can be decluttered or freshened; identifying

dedicated spaces for exercise or reading or puzzles can help maintain a routine in the months we are home. Consider what brightens your spirits and how these elements can be added to your surroundings to combat the cold weather and fewer hours of sunlight; photographs of grandchildren, warm and bright lighting, a stocked pantry ready for baking adventures, and a cozy reading nook are several examples.

Enjoy these warmer days and continue to be vigilant about your health and safety.

We can all adapt to this season of separation by finding new ways to connect with others and ourselves, maintaining faith that we will be able to come together sooner rather than later.



Need help connecting virtually???



Marcia Feldman is available to assist you. Please email your request to mfeldman@cwvillage.org or leave a message at extension 1389.

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.

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