Our day-to-day lives look very different than they did a month ago, or even a week ago. Our lives will likely look different given another week or another month. Instead of dwelling on the uncertainty that lies ahead, focus on taking steps to prepare yourself and your family for both the current circumstances and those that could become a reality. If you haven’t done so already, start by checking out the Fund’s fact sheet: Coronavirus & COVID-19: Preparation and Response.

It may be difficult to think about preparing for the future when it seems like so many decisions need to be made today, and when the situation surrounding the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 changes almost daily. If you haven’t taken the following steps already, it’s not too late to start. Reviewing this list may help you realize how many small steps you’ve already taken to prepare yourself and your family for the weeks and months ahead.

Create a Household Action Plan

- Identify who needs to be included – household members, relatives, friends – and the daily needs of each person; include mental and emotional needs.
- Plan ways to care for those at higher risk for serious complications:
  - Make sure they have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case they need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.
  - If possible, prepare separate sleeping quarters in case one member of the household gets infected.
- Create an emergency contact list:
  - People on it may include family, friends, neighbors, employers and co-workers, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers and other community resources.
  - This list can be utilized if there is an outbreak in your household to quickly alert others, to help stay in contact and to coordinate errands.

Purchase Essential Items

- Groceries. Maintain a two-week supply of non-perishable and freezer-friendly foods. If possible, opt for shelf-stable and nutrient-rich options like beans and legumes, no-sodium-added vegetables, sugar-free canned fruit, nut butter, high-fiber cereal, whole wheat pasta and brown rice. Consider options for getting these items that don’t involve you going to the store to pick them off the shelf, such as curbside pickup or delivery services. Choose the best option for you based on your comfort level and risk level for health complications.
- Household items. Keep daily use items like toilet paper, soap, detergent, cleaning products and, if applicable, diapers and pet food well-stocked. Strike a balance between having an adequate supply to minimize trips or deliveries with avoiding hoarding, which could result in a shortage for others in the community.
- Medicines. When possible, maintain a 30-day supply of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and vitamins.
- While following recommended health and safety protocols, help family members, neighbors, friends and other loved ones by picking up some of these items if they are unable to or uncomfortable with leaving the house.

Focus on What Can Be Maintained

- A sense of community. This can be particularly challenging during periods of social distancing, quarantining and isolation. Phone calls, video calls, text messaging and other forms of communication can help us feel connected and partially satisfy a need for human interaction. In-person communication may still be appropriate under the following circumstances:
  - Minimum of six feet between people
  - No known exposure to COVID-19
  - Not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Routine. Many of us have been forced out of our normal routines. To maintain a sense of normalcy, focus on ways to add structure to your day. Have set wake and sleep times; eat meals and snacks at times of day you normally would; even if you’re mostly confined to the house, change into regular clothes; set limits on screen time. Talk with members of your household and come up with a rough schedule that takes everyone’s needs and interests into account.
Physical activity. Aim to exercise for at least 20 to 30 minutes every day. This could mean getting fresh air and going for a walk, stretching, doing bodyweight exercises like squats and push-ups or getting creative with items around the house as weights. Avoid doing anything to the extreme, like buying expensive dietary supplements, going on a diet or ramping up the intensity of your workouts, all of which could be too taxing on your body. Your goal is to do your best to maintain the status quo.

Try to Remain Flexible Despite the Realities of a Pandemic
Being flexible when your life is being turned upside down is easier said than done. Think of flexibility more like a mindset for how you approach these tough-to-handle situations. It may not be in your nature, but try to roll with the punches as they come. For example, you may be forced to be less picky at the grocery store if the normal foods you buy aren’t available. Choose to tackle problems like these in a different way (in this case, break out of cooking the same few meals for dinner and put on your chef hat).

It may feel like so much is out of your control right now and that you’re stuck waiting for more instructions, guidance and recommendations from local, state and federal agencies. By shifting your focus to what you can control, you can use this time to stay grounded, strengthen bonds with family and friends and come out on the other side with fresh perspective.

The Fund will continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and provide you with guidance, recommendations and resources. For more information on the Fund’s response to COVID-19, please visit our Coronavirus & COVID-19 Resources page or contact us at lifelines@lhsfna.org.

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