GUSTINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Safety Newsletter

Merced County Schools Insurance Group

**A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention**

Fall 2020

## Quarantine Fatigue

We are all spending more time at home as we navigate through this pandemic. Since March many of us have worked from home, our kids have been schooled from home, and social activities have been kept to a minimum. As we enter the winter season, we are, once again, forced to stay indoors. The quarantine fatigue has taken its toll on many of us causing a combination of symptoms from anxiety to sluggishness. Quarantine fatigue looks different for everyone.

**Keep a routine**

- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day. This includes weekends. Establish a routine that your body can get used to so that you can feel refreshed and operate at optimum.
- Set up zones and boundaries at home, especially if you are also working from home. Carve out separate spaces for work, play, and sleep.
- Leave work at work. At the end of each day, shut down your devices and log off completely. Take a short walk to help clear your mind and reset before returning home.

**Move more.** If you are working from home you may find yourself getting less steps in than if you were working at the office. Focus on moving around more. Make regular exercise a part of every day. Exercise is not only good for health but it will help boost mood and lower stress levels. Although you may have limited access to a gym, you can still get exercise in other ways. Try online fitness classes like yoga, cardio boxing, or dance. Leave the house and just go for a walk around the neighborhood block.

**Continue to Socialize Safely.** Tap into the use of technology to continue to connect with family, friends and the community. Try video phone calls or online games and movies and invite others. Encourage family and friends to do the same to maintain communication and keep in touch. As we continue to move through the pandemic the idea is to physically distance ourselves from others, but not cut off the socialization. Which is why many choose to use the phrase *physical distancing* versus *social distancing*.

**Give yourself a break.** COVID-19 has changed everyone's life. If you are not feeling like your usual self and maybe more run down from this quarantine fatigue, that is **normal.** Be kind to yourself by taking time to rest, recharge, and make your emotional health a priority.

## Caring for a Face Mask

Face coverings are mandatory to help slow the spread of COVID-19. It's a good idea to have at least two, if not more face masks. You should always have a fresh mask available. Always keep clean masks in rotation. You will want a clean mask whenever you go someplace where staying 6 feet away from others might be a challenge. Keep your mask on until you have finished your trip, errand, or work shift. To safely take off your mask, follow these steps:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
2. Don't touch the front of the mask or your face.
3. Carefully remove your mask by grasping the ear loops or untying the ties.
4. If the mask has filters, remove them and discard. Fold the mask, place directly into the laundry.
5. Wash your hands again with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Launder the mask after every wearing.

- Face masks made of fabric can be washed in your regular laundry using hot water and detergent.
- Disposable surgical masks should be thrown away when visibly soiled or damaged.
- After laundering fabric masks, tumble dry them in the dryer on a high setting.
- Store clean masks in a clean place.

**Beat the Fog.** As you breathe, warm breath escapes upward and glides across the lens. The difference between the warm breath and the cooler surface of the glasses creates condensation and fogs up the lenses.

1. Wash glasses with soapy water. Let them air dry, or use a soft tissue prior to putting on the glasses.
2. Dab a little bit of the shaving cream on the lenses and let it dry. Once dry wipe off with a soft cloth or a microfiber cleaning cloth.
3. Anti-Fog Spray. There are anti-fog sprays on the market made specifically glasses. Take steps to properly clean the chemical spray off the lenses entirely before putting the glasses on again. Any residual chemical left on the lenses may cause eye irritation.
4. Ensure the mask fits your face so there no gaps at the top of the cheeks and bridge of the nose. This will help minimize any air escaping from the top of your mask.

Try the *Librarian Look.* Push the glasses forward and wear them further down the nose. It may help with the fogging by creating more space for airflow.

## Survive Thanksgiving During the Pandemic

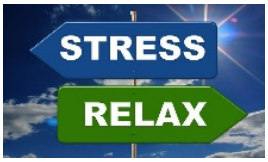
Good infection control measures are imperative as COVID-19 infections are on the rise. During the holidays, continue to follow safety guidelines.

- Keeping a safe physical distance of 6 feet or more from others that are not a part of your household.
- Wearing a mask covering your nose and mouth.
- Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more.

In addition to these daily guidelines the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released guidelines specific for celebrating Thanksgiving advising Americans to:

- Host smaller gatherings.
- Eat meals outdoors with family and friends who live in your community.
- If celebrating indoors, open windows.
- Ask guest to bring their own food and drink. But, if you will be sharing food, have one person serve the food and use single-use utensils.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and items and between use, and limit the number of people in food preparation areas. Frequently touched areas include: table tops, counter tops, door knobs, light switches, other surfaces, etc.
- Have guests wear a mask. Masks can be removed and safely stored when eating and drinking.
- Have guests avoid going in and out of areas where food is being prepared.

Whatever the new normal, prioritizing your health and those of your household is an important step to surviving this holiday season.




## 4 Quick Tips to De-Stress:

1. Stretch- When you're feeling stressed or anxious take a few minutes to stretch. Focus on stretching out the neck, opening up the chest and shoulders, stretching the arms and hands. Ensure to hold the stretch for at least 15 seconds each.
2. Meditate- Take several minutes to tune out the world. No phone, no email, no computer. Try sitting for several minutes with your eyes closed in complete silence and void of thought.
3. Change the environment- If you are working inside the office, step out briefly to the breakroom. If you are inside your home, get up from the chair and move into a different room. If you are able to, go outdoors and get fresh air, as long as you can still safely physically distance yourself from others.
4. Listen to music- This can be a great way to boost your mood. Put on some relaxing music, ocean waves or nature sounds which can help calm your stress and anxiety. Another great idea is to listen to an up-beat song for a quick pick me up feel if you're feeling down.

## 6 Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use

1. If disinfecting for Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Check that your product is EPA approved by finding the EPA registered number on the products then checking to see if it's on the EPA list of approved disinfectants by going to www.EPA.Gov/ListN
2. Read the disinfectant label of how to safely and effectively use the product. Ensure to read the "precautionary statements" as well.
3. Clean the surface by removing any dust, dirt, grime or debris prior to applying the disinfectant. The surface can be cleaned using soap and water.
4. Pay attention to the "dwell" time. The dwell time or contact time can be found on the label. The surface should remain wet the entire time.
5. Wear gloves and any other PPE that the label states. Wash your hands after you take off the gloves and are finished using the disinfectant.
6. Lock it up! Keep lids tightly closed. Properly store the disinfectant out of reach of children and pets.

## Spread the Holiday Cheer

The Holidays can be a tough time for some. This year is even more difficult for many to deal with factoring in the required physical distancing and restricted celebrations. Helping others in need can be a great way to stay connected and spread holiday cheer. Lend a helping hand with organizations such as the Salvation Army https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/ and the American Cancer Society Discovery Shop. https://www.cancer.org/involved/donate/more-ways-to-give/discovery-shops-n ational/discovery-shop-locations.html

Check out Samaritan's Purse. Find a shoebox, collect various items, like toys, school supplies, hygiene items and pack into a shoebox. Drop off the shoebox at a designated location. There are online options - you can donate money and have the organization build the shoebox on your behalf to donate to a child. It's a great way to give, spread a little cheer, and still keep your distance. For more information, visit https://www.samaritanspurse.org/

There are local charities and food banks that could use a donation, too. Let's all find ways to help each other while still keeping safe and healthy.