



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH TEXAS  
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER *at* FORT WORTH

## CENTER FOR GERIATRICS

### COVID-19 Special Edition: *Monthly Updates & Resources | June 2020*

*To view previous COVID-19 newsletters, please visit [unthsc.edu/geriatrics](http://unthsc.edu/geriatrics).*

## VENTURING OUT?

### ***Considerations before leaving the house.***

As communities across the country begin to reopen from COVID-19 shutdowns, you may wonder how to safely resume your normal routine, while avoiding the risk of infection. The [Centers For Disease Control and Prevention](#) has compiled a list of tips and considerations that can help you stay safe as you reintegrate back into society.

### **WHAT INCREASES MY RISK OF COVID-19 SPREAD?**

In general, how close and long you interact with others impacts the risk of COVID-19 spread. Here are a few points to consider before interacting with others.

- Interacting with **more people**, especially those you do not live with, or those who are not socially distancing, or wearing a mask, raises your risk.
- If you can, meet outside where there is **more space** to distance yourself from others. It is also important to be in a well-ventilated area.
- Spending **more time** with others can increase both your risk and their risk of infection.

### **WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU GO**

Ask yourself the questions below to determine your level of risk for infection before leaving the house:

- [Is COVID-19 spreading in my community?](#)
- [What are the local orders in my community?](#)
- [Am I at risk, or do I live with someone who is at risk, for severe illness?](#)
- [Do I practice everyday preventive actions?](#)
- [Will I have to share any items, equipment, or tools with other people?](#)
- [Does my activity require travel to another community?](#)
- [Do I know what to do if I get sick?](#)

If and when you decide to venture out, be sure to continue to protect yourself. Always have a face covering, tissues, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol on hand to reduce your chance of infection and spread of germs. For more tips from the CDC about running errands and going out, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/going-out.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/going-out.html).

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Effective Friday, June 26th through August 3rd, face coverings will be **required** in all Tarrant County businesses for both employees and customers.

Learn more at [fortworthtexas.gov](http://fortworthtexas.gov).

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## ORAL HEALTH AFFECTS THE REST OF YOUR BODY

Oral health and hygiene is important for your mouth, teeth, gums, overall well-being, and can significantly impact your quality of life. Only 60 percent of Texans 65 and older report they visited a dentist in the past year. Over 32 percent report missing six or more teeth. Poor oral health can increase the risk of developing chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

As we age, it is important to have a daily routine for oral hygiene. Regular preventive care by a dental provider is key to maintaining oral health. Dental providers look for tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer and signs of chronic disease. Things to consider for a healthy mouth:

**Brush Twice A Day:** Brushing your teeth twice a day dramatically affects the health of your mouth. If conditions like arthritis make it difficult to brush, try a toothbrush with a larger handle or a battery-powered one.

**Floss Daily:** Use floss to clean between your teeth at least once a day. Flossers (floss on a stick) can be easier to hold and maneuver rather than string floss. It can help prevent bacteria buildup that contributes to development of certain oral diseases. Bleeding while brushing or flossing is not normal and can be an early sign of gum disease and certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes. If your gums bleed when you brush or floss, contact your dental provider.

**Nutrition:** Eating nutritious food is important for your oral health. Sugary and acidic foods can feed bacteria in your mouth and weaken tooth enamel.

**Drink Water for Dry Mouth:** Drinking plenty of water throughout the day can help relieve dry mouth. Bacteria thrive in a dry environment and the risk of tooth decay increases. If you use a lozenge, gum, candy or mints, make sure they are sugar-free.

**Don't Delay:** If you have a tooth bothering you, don't delay getting it examined. Putting off treatment can make the issue worse and can be more expensive to treat later.

Dental insurance can be costly, and programs like Medicaid and Medicare often have limited or no dental coverage for adults. Transportation and assistance to appointments can also be a barrier in receiving timely oral health care. If you need help, your local Aging and Disability Resource Center can connect you to available assistance in your area. To find your ADRC, call 855-937-2372. To learn more on oral health, visit [dshs.texas.gov/dental](https://dshs.texas.gov/dental).

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## WEBINARS & PODCASTS

- The CDC's Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program presents **Health Risks of Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older Adults**. Dr. Craig Thomas, director of CDC's Division of Population Health, is interviewed about a new report on this topic. Listen to the podcast at <https://tools.cdc.gov/medialibrary/index.aspx#/media/id/407659>.
- **Take Control of Your Health at Home: Self-Management Program** The North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging is hosting FREE phone-in or Zoom virtual group workshops on Chronic Disease, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain. Workshops meet once a week, for one hour or two and a half hours, over the course of six weeks. Learn more at [nctcog.org/aging-services](http://nctcog.org/aging-services) or call 800-272-3921.
- **Virtual Town Hall: Addressing Current and Ongoing Issues Faced by Long Term Care Facilities**. Hear from experts in the field of geriatrics as they discuss the impact of COVID-19 and the current issues being faced within long-term care facilities. Topics included in this presentation include: Staffing Considerations, Patient Care Concerns, and Continued Precautions. Watch the Virtual Town Hall at <https://youtu.be/R60U6dU14ml>.

## STAY CONNECTED



### COVID-19 Antibody Testing Now Available for all Blood Donors

Due to COVID-19, community blood supplies are critically low, and all blood donors are needed **NOW**. For a limited time, receive a free COVID-19 antibody test just for donating! Visit [carterbloodcare.org](http://carterbloodcare.org) to schedule an appointment to donate.



### Virtual Education & Support for Caregivers

The Alzheimer's Association is offering free virtual community programs for information and resources about Alzheimer's and other dementias. Learn about their weekly virtual support groups. For more information or to register by phone, call 800.272.3900.



### COVID-19 Fraud Alert

Scammers are now using the names of federal agencies to offer free benefits from well-known companies - but this could drain your bank account. Watch this short video from the Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office to learn how to avoid being ripped off in the name of COVID-19. <https://youtu.be/Nu6cdX7-sm8>

## COLONIAL HONORS HEALTHCARE WORKERS



[Dr. Janice Knebl](#) from HSC's Department of Geriatrics was selected, among other North Texas healthcare workers, to have her name honored during the Charles Schwab Challenge at the Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth. Dr. Knebl's name was seen on Harold Varner III's caddy's bib of as a thank you from the PGA Tour for healthcare worker's tireless efforts during COVID-19. Watch the news clip from WFAA Channel 8 at <https://youtu.be/82zmLr6wIWY>.