



*Caring for the
Next Generation*

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How can I be a good neighbor?

First and foremost, we encourage you to stay away from others. However, we do know that social interaction will be important for our emotional health. We need to be safe but creative. Remember your neighbor may be in your home, next door, in our city or across the globe. Here are some suggestions on how this can safely be accomplished.

- 1) One way to be a good neighbor is to stay well. Obviously we want all of our patients to stay well. When you stay well, you allow healthcare resources to go to those who are not well. How do we stay well? Well, it comes down to the things we always talk about in the office. This is a good time to work on good eating habits. Don't miss this opportunity to have family meals (find non-coronavirus topics to discuss during meals—there are multiple resources out there for these topics). Model good eating for your children. Drink a lot of water. When we are all home more, we will be tempted to snack. The more water we drink, the more we will feel appropriately full and not over snack and over eat. Continue to exercise. We all need a good 30 minutes (an hour if it's start and stop) 4 or 5 days a week. And, we all need to be getting plenty of sleep. Try to keep on a regular schedule. Eating healthy, drinking water, (don't forget your calcium), exercise, and sleep will help us to maintain a healthy immune system and thus fight off all illnesses and especially coronavirus.
- 2) We know that many of you have grandparents who are living in your homes and providing care for your children. However, when possible, we encourage you to distance yourself from those who are over 60 and who are more vulnerable. We need to isolate but not forget the vulnerable. If you grandparents in town or have those in your neighborhood who are vulnerable and don't have family in town, reach out to them. Offer to run essential errands (groceries or pharmacy or take out while we are able to). Encourage those who are high risk to utilize services (like HEB's delivery for those over 60). Please encourage those who are vulnerable to get outside and go for walks or sit in a yard or courtyard to get sunlight. You can Facetime them during meals or at random times in the day. As long as city ordinances allow, go park in front of their house or apartment, roll the window down, and talk to them while they stay in their doorway or parking lot.
- 3) Have your teenagers help the elderly figure out how to set up and do Facetime, What's App, Skype or Zoom. Help them set up a Venmo account so they can pay neighbors back for buying groceries. Help them set up Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, or Youtube TV so they can watch movies if they don't have access. Help them set up online banking



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so they don't need to go out to the bank (call the bank yourself and ask if they can set up online banking without going into the bank).

- 4) If you know an individual who lives by themselves, Facetime them during a meal.
- 5) Utilize platforms like Netflix parties for kids to have a popcorn and movie night together.
- 6) Organize a Zoom meeting for a dinner party with a bunch of friends. Then pay your favorite pianist to play background music during your dinner. The larger the group, you will need to mute yourself when you are not talking so that there is not a lot of background noise.
- 7) I was driving to the office this morning and saw a mom playing in a church parking lot with her two young kids. If you don't have a yard to play in, utilize an open field or larger unused parking lot (you may need to set up cones and make sure you kids are safe from cars in the lot or the adjacent street). Remember, it's important that we get outside and get sunlight and exercise.
- 8) Have a date night in the garage or even your dining room after your kids go to bed. Moms and dads still need conversation that is not about coronavirus or the maintenance of who is doing dinner and going to the grocery store.
- 9) Parents of infants through pre-school. Many of you have heard me say the last couple months that we need to help our children be comfortable being board. Well here is your opportunity. Our kids need to know it's not our job to entertain them 24 / 7. I encourage you to give each of your kids at least 2 rest times (1-2 hours each) even if they are down to 1 or no naps. Put them in a safe room where they can't get out and where they can entertain themselves with books and toys (no technology—it's a blessing to have right now, but technology still needs limits). They won't like this and it likely won't go well at first, but they will get used to it. We parents need this time for our sanity and many of you are trying to work from home and watch your kids at the same time (I just found you 4 hours :). I know this suggestion is going to work better for some than others. Please know that I'm not only giving you permission, I am really encouraging you to do this.
- 10) I know we will all be in different financial places over the next few weeks. But, if you are able to pay for expenses you that you were already planning on doing, it would be helpful to do so. This could include (and obviously not limited to) your child's day care, pre-school, ballet class, karate class, gym membership, music lessons, AAU coach, pitching coach, house keeper, nanny, yardman, charitable organizations (food bank, meals on wheels, local homeless shelter, churches, temples, synagogues, missionaries, etc.)



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- 11) While we are able to still do take-out, support the local economy and order food to go. Some institutions are “mom and pop” which are nice to support, but even national chains have local employees who need to support themselves. I know we need to eat healthy, but try to figure out a balance with being healthy and supporting the local economy. And, I know if things get financially tighter, some will not be able to eat take out.
- 12) Again, we know these are new, challenging, and extraordinary times. However, during these difficult times, don’t miss the opportunity to take advantage of the blessings and opportunities that are available. Maybe this is where we all realize that we all have been going too fast and furious. Take the time to slow down. Spend time just thinking. Perhaps this is a time for some of you to stop and pray more for yourself and for your community, city, state, country and world. Enjoy family meals and time together. Perhaps this is the time to have “The” talk with your 9-11 year old. Perhaps this is a time to mend a broken relationship with a parent, your child, an old friend or neighbor. Perhaps this is when you actually get to know your neighbor. I know that some of you like us at Heritage are spending even more time than normal trying to figure out your new normal. However, please don’t waste the opportunities we have to be a good neighbor in your homes, your neighborhood, our city and around the world over the coming weeks.