Physical distancing means keeping six feet between ourselves and other people when we leave our homes. We also call this “social distancing.” Distancing helps slow the spread of COVID-19 and protects our health and communities. However, it can also make us feel lonely.

If you feel lonely right now, you aren’t alone! But did you know that loneliness can affect your health?

Loneliness and your health

Loneliness can contribute to health conditions such as:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke, and
- Arthritis.

It can even cause other health conditions such as:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Lowered immune system, and
- Increased inflammation.

Staying connected with our loved ones can help keep us healthy. Creating a plan to stay healthy while physically distancing is so important.

Make a plan and connect

Make a list

Family, friends and neighbors can help you create a plan to stay safe, healthy and socially connected.

Your plan can list people and their contact information. This will help you connect with a loved one or get help with food, medicine and other household items.

Support one another

It is important to support each other during times of stress.

Here are some ways to stay connected while physically distancing:

- **Give them a call:** Make phone calls a regular part of your relationships.
- **Write a letter:** Send letters or emails to share your feelings. Let people know you are thinking about them.
- **Try video calls:** If you can, use video calling services such as Skype, FaceTime or WhatsApp.
- **Try text messaging:** Reach out to people individually. You can also create a group chat to discuss things together.
Identify resources in your community

A list of community resources can help you get information, health care services, support and resources. Here are some places you can find resources in your community:

- **Your neighborhood** may have a website or social media page you can join. That will help you stay connected to neighbors, information and resources.

- **The Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon (ADRC)** has trained staff. They can help assess your needs and connect you with local resources. Go to [www.adrcoforegon.org](http://www.adrcoforegon.org) or call 1-855-ORE-ADRC (673-2372).

- **2-1-1** has up-to-date information about COVID-19 and local resources. Dial 2-1-1 or visit [www.211info.org](http://www.211info.org).

- **The Senior Loneliness Line** (800-282-7035) is a statewide service available to any older adult experiencing loneliness, isolation, depression or anxiety. Callers can talk with a trained counselor. Calls are confidential. Visit [www.SeniorLonelinessLine.org](http://www.SeniorLonelinessLine.org).

About COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus was first discovered in people in December 2019. Health experts are concerned because we don’t know much yet about this new virus. But we do know a few things that can help us stay safe.

**COVID-19 can spread through:**

- The air through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, or
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

**Here are some ways you can slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect yourself:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid contact with sick people. Stay home if you’re sick.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away right after you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and sanitize objects and surfaces you touch often.

You can find the most up-to-date COVID-19 information on the Oregon Health Authority COVID-19 webpage: [https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19](https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19). Additional resources can also be found at [https://www.safestrongoregon.org/](https://www.safestrongoregon.org/).

You can get this document free of charge in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or OHA.ADAModifications@dhsoha.state.or.us.