

# Comfort STAYING CALM

## Why This Is Important

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**The pandemic flu virus may be circulating in our communities for up to three months per wave.**

Measures to minimize the disease may include "sheltering-in-place" or "self-quarantine", to reduce exposure to the virus. This is a long period of relative isolation.

If you are reading this and planning and preparing, you are building strength for yourself, your group. There will be obstacles. There will be bad days, perhaps even tragic ones. Circumstances will not always be easy or pleasant. We all understand that.

Most of the time, the right attitude and proper preparation will get you through.

## How Your Personal Situation Might Be Affected

1. As the pandemic progresses, you may observe or experience a wide range of emotional responses in yourself and the people around you.



- Denial
- Anger/blaming
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite
- Sleep disturbances
- Family problems
- Fatigue
- Crying
- Panic
- Depression
- Restlessness

These are real, expected, and usually temporary responses.

2. Special needs of children. Children are greatly affected by disasters and will need extra reassurance. An excellent guide, "Helping Your Child Cope with Disaster", is available from Virginia Cooperative Extension at <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/disaster/490-309/490-309.html>



## Practical tips

The following is offered for your consideration, from the experience of a cruising sailor/medic, and is used courtesy of *Avian Flu Diary*.



**1. If your relationships at home need work, consider ways to resolve those issues and disputes NOW** – instead of having to do it in close quarters later.

**2. Don't expect your spouse, kids, or significant other to have done everything right prior to isolation.**

You won't have, neither will they. If, come a pandemic, you discover that your spouse forgot to buy soy sauce for the rice, get over it! Couples may bicker and fight over the silliest things, and it's often the little gripes that fester the most.



**3. Cross training is important.** Cruising couples who did well could both cook meals and change the oil in the engine. Both could handle the boat. Those couples where one person sailed and the other did galley duty were doomed from the start. The non-sailing person lived in perpetual fear that the sailing partner would fall overboard, or be injured, and they'd be stuck far out at sea with no clue. The sailing partner would grow exasperated at their partner's inability to assist them.



Divide home chores among ALL family members. One spouse may say "The dishes need to be done AND the kids need a bath...which would you like to do? I will do the other..."

**4. Don't shout, no matter how dire the situation.** Aboard a boat, often the captain will bark orders to his crew. The less confident he (or she) is in their orders, the more likely they are to raise their voice. Hurt feelings abound, and mutinies often erupt. For inter-room communication, get a pair of cheap walkie-talkies. Use them.



**5. Think of your family unit as a team...**a combat platoon, who always has their buddy's back. Ask any medic, any cop, and they will tell you that their partner is a member of their family.

**6. Communicate.** Talk about your fears, don't hide them. Find work-arounds now, not later. Find out each other's strengths and weaknesses. Change those you can, accept those you cannot. If

someone in your group needs meds for anxiety, get them. If someone can't handle alcohol, don't let them have it (even if it's you!).



**7. Keep your sense of humor.** Don't ridicule others, but make fun of yourself, or the situation. Encourage others to do the same. It is the ultimate stress reducer.

**8. Try to find some 'personal space' for each family member.**

Everyone needs a retreat, even if it's nothing more than a personal radio/CD player with headphones. Books, games, CDs – whatever works.

**9. Decide on a chain of command.** Every boat needs a captain. Pick one. There will be group decisions, of course, and a good captain will want input from his team, but someone needs to be in charge. You can rotate this position, swap days...whatever. But during a crisis, committees can dither when decisive action is required.

**10. Establish rules and routines.** There should be rules about almost everything, especially where children are concerned. Set these rules when you begin sheltering in place. See how they work for 2-3 weeks, and then adjust as needed. Examples are the time set for schoolwork, TV, and phone time. The strictest rules must address going in and out, to minimize exposure to the flu virus.

Complementing the rules are routines. These provide structure to the day, and include things like chores, schoolwork, creative time, family time, clean time, and self/free time. There should be a daily exercise period for everyone. Have specific days where something special happens. Maybe each Friday is "crank up the generator and watch a movie" night, or there are pancakes with chocolate chips for breakfast each Saturday, or game night on Wednesdays with popcorn.



**11. Decide right now that your ultimate goal is not your personal survival.** Your goal is the survival of the people in your group. If you're a lone wolf, go it alone. Otherwise, accept that you exist primarily for the common good of your group. Try to instill that attitude in every adult in your family unit.

**...And Finally**



**Value and foster a good friend or relative that you can just talk things over with.**