

ARE YOU FEELING LONELY?

Here are some tips that can help.

Most people feel lonely at some point in their lives. And, they probably don't think it's a big deal. But loneliness can impact both your physical and mental well-being.

In May 2018, Cigna surveyed 20,000 adults to understand the impact of loneliness in the United States. Cigna's U.S. Loneliness Index¹ showed that:

Nearly
50%

of Americans reported sometimes or always feeling alone.

1 in 4

Americans rarely or never feels as though there are people who understand them.

Adults
age
18-22

are the loneliest generation and claim to be in worse health than people older than them.

People with chronic and other serious conditions such as depression,² heart disease³ and diabetes⁴ have something in common - they may also suffer from loneliness. Loneliness has the same impact on death rates as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.⁵

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. If you're not feeling lonely, you probably know someone who is.

Connecting with others in person can help. Here are a few ideas on how to make it happen.

- 1.** Call a friend or family member to say hi, set up a time to go to lunch or drop by for a visit.
- 2.** Next time you walk through the office or go to the gym or coffee shop, stop and talk with others. Also try to have in-person meetings instead of by phone.
- 3.** Sign up for a group exercise class, to break a sweat and meet new people.
- 4.** Get the right amount of sleep each night. Try not to use technology right before bedtime.
- 5.** Get involved in your community and find ways to volunteer your time. You can start by going to websites for organizations like the United Way or VolunteerMatch. They can match you with volunteer opportunities based on your interests.
- 6.** Pursue a new hobby, sport or learning opportunity. Join a team or organization and attend their events and activities.

Together, all the way.®



Help is available.

Your health plan may also have programs to help you manage feelings of loneliness, stress or just feeling down.

- ▶ Check out your health plan's website, call the phone number on your insurance card or ask your HR representative about the benefits included in your plan. Some common types of benefits could include annual preventive screenings, an employee assistance program to help with life's stresses or mental health benefits to help get you on a path to feeling better.
- ▶ When you're in the doctor's office, don't be afraid to share how you're feeling mentally and physically. As an example, start by saying that you have been feeling lonely or sad and want to know what you can do about it.
- ▶ Don't be embarrassed to talk with your friends. Ask a friend if they've ever spoken with a counselor or doctor about how they're feeling, and if they have a recommendation on who to talk with.
- ▶ Talking with people in similar situations can be helpful. Ask your doctor or HR representative if they can help you locate support groups in your area. Mental Health America may also help you find a group.



You are not alone.

You can also visit **Cigna.com** to take our brief loneliness quiz. It was designed to measure your feelings of loneliness and provides ideas on how to connect with others. We also encourage you to talk with your doctor about how you are feeling – both mentally and physically.



1. Cigna's U.S. Loneliness Index, 2018; <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8294451-cigna-us-loneliness-survey/>.

2. Unraveling the Role of Loneliness in Depression: The Relationship Between Daily Life Experience and Behavior, Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 2017; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00332747.2016.1256143>.

3. Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke: systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal observational studies, *BMJ Journals Heart*, 2016; <http://heart.bmj.com/content/102/13/1009.info>.

4. Socially isolated individuals are more prone to have newly diagnosed and prevalent type 2 diabetes mellitus – the Maastricht study, *BMC Public Health*, 2017; <https://bmcpubhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-017-4948-6>.

5. Testimony before the US Senate Aging Committee, Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Ph.D., 2017; https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SCA_Holt_04_27_17.pdf.

This is general health information and not medical advice or services. Always consult with your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing, and health care recommendations.

All Cigna products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Cigna Behavioral Health, Inc., Cigna Health Management, Inc., and HMO or service company subsidiaries of Cigna Health Corporation. The Cigna name, logo, and other Cigna marks are owned by Cigna Intellectual Property, Inc. All pictures are used for illustrative purposes.