
Living with a Chronic Health Condition

Sometimes change brings unexpected rewards. This is a good time to look for all the ways you can be involved in life. Challenge yourself. Don't be afraid, or think of yourself as limited. As you begin to see what you can do, you'll realize just how much you have to offer others.

Thinking

At times, you may want to be alone with your thoughts. At other times, you'll want to explore new interests. Try some of the following:

- If you don't already know how, learn to use a computer. Computers can connect you to a vast amount of information. Many public libraries have computers you can use free of charge.
- Read just for pleasure. Try novels, magazines, humor, even cookbooks.
- Play board games or computer games.
- Plan a trip, listen to music, or start a journal.



Doing

Think about what you enjoy doing. Then find ways to make it happen. Your healthcare provider, nurse, or occupational therapist may be able to help you get started. Consider the following:

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- Take a class in healthy cooking. What you learn can help, whether or not you're on a special diet.
 - Ask someone to take you to a ball game or on a picnic.
 - Go on a nature walk or work in the garden.

Relating to others

Over time, your bonds with some people may grow stronger while some may not last. As you move forward, keep these tips in mind:

- Try volunteering in an activity or area you enjoy. It's a good way to be involved with others.
- Be open to new people you meet.
- Find ways to keep up friendships you value. If you have to cancel plans, try to reschedule. If you can access a computer, use email to stay in touch. Call or text.

To learn more

- [American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) or 800-342-2383
- [American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or 800-227-2345
- [American Heart Association at www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) 800-242-8721
- [American Lung Association at www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org) or 800-586-4872
- [Arthritis Foundation at www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org) or 800-283-7800
- [Medicare Hotline at www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or 800-633-4227
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness at www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) or 800-950-6264
- [Americans with Disabilities Act at www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or 800-949-4232. You can find out about disability benefits and rights under the ADA.

Talk with your healthcare provider about other support resources. You can also check your city and state government websites for resources.