

## Chronic Disease and the Pandemic

COVID-19 has changed life in so many ways, especially those with scleroderma and other chronic diseases. As people stayed home during the pandemic, many cancelled routine doctor visits or moved their visits virtually. One study noted that adults were less likely have a virtual care appointment and that doctors, were less likely to offer virtual visits to their patients. People chose to prolong their routine wellness visits because of this risking medial issues in the future.

The disruption of routine and social interaction is linked to poorer mental health and resilience. For a chronically ill person, the restrictions have led to more isolation than the average person and for a greater period of time.

It is no secret that many have struggled with mental health over the last year. One major impact of isolation is its correlation to loneliness—increasing the risk of depression and other mental health issues.

Explore our tips to help your mental health

1. **Stay Connected.** Prevent loneliness and isolation by reaching out to friends and family. Social support and interaction will help maintain your mental health.
2. **Talk to your Doctor.** Address mental health concerns with your doctors. Your mental health is just as important as your body.
3. **Find new hobbies.** Learn a new skill and routines. Creating a new schedule allows your mind to reset

The scleroderma community is here to help. Explore the Scleroderma Foundation website for resources and support: [Scleroderma.org](https://www.scleroderma.org)

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8198084/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5479398/>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02201/full>

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