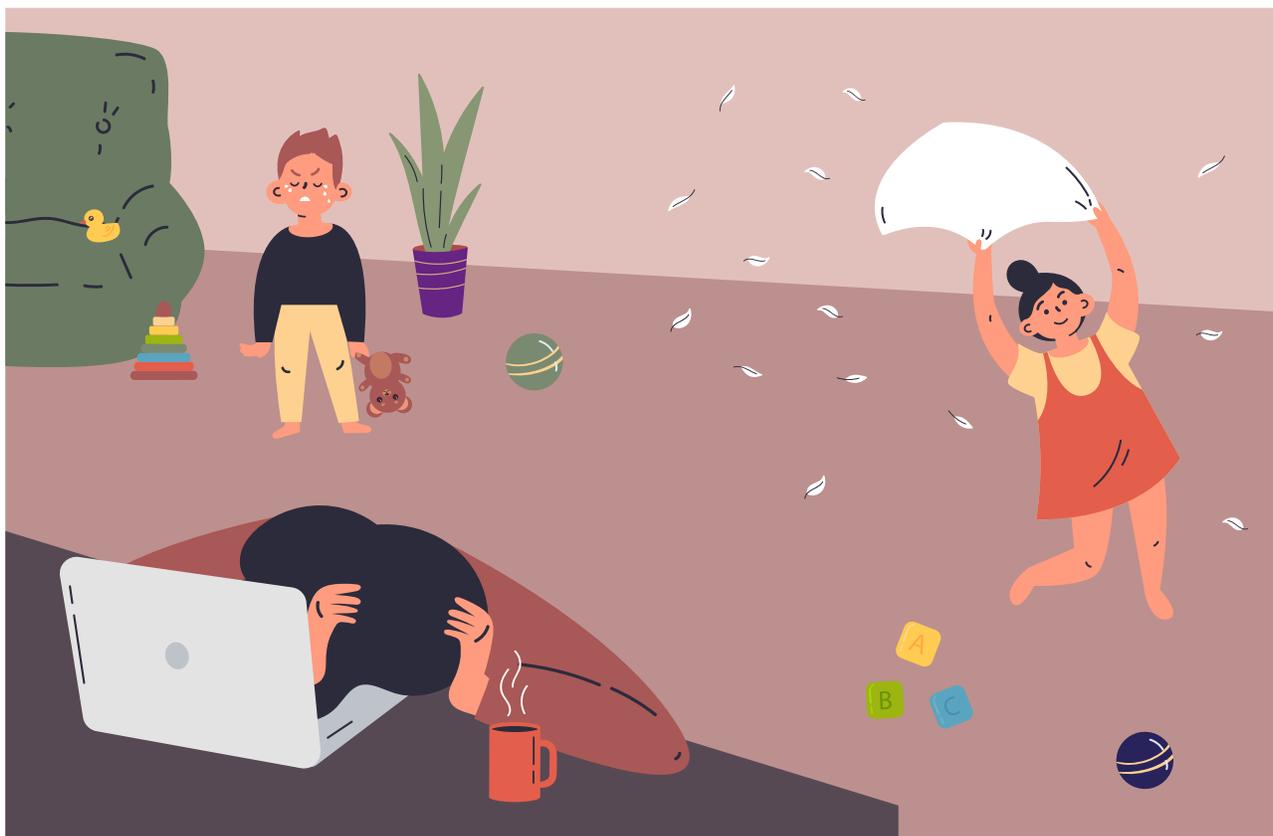


What You Need to Know

An in-depth look at signs of pandemic fatigue and how to stay vigilant, how wearing a mask protects the wearer in addition to other people, how one nursing home worker refuses to retire during the COVID-19 crisis, and more

We May Be Over the Pandemic, But It's Far From Over



Eight months into the pandemic, as we enter the holiday season, many of us are tired of staying home, missing friends and family, Zoom calls, cooking our own meals... the list goes on and on. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 on the rise all over the country and cold weather setting in, it's as important as ever to stick with those healthy habits and continue wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands. **Recognizing some of the reasons for pandemic fatigue**—including a false perception of how likely it is you'll get the virus or have a bad case of it, loosening restrictions and lax behavior by others, and prolonged social isolation—may help remind everyone of where this all started, and highlight that the situation hasn't gotten better; rather, it's getting worse. It might be hard to stay vigilant against the virus, but listen to the experts on how to protect yourself and others, keep following state and local guidance to help slow the spread of COVID-19, and trust the pandemic will end.

ESCAPE ROOM



Follow clues and solve puzzles to help a medical team diagnose a sick child before the timer runs out.

Play our escape game online at patientsafety.pa.gov/EscapeRoom/

#PSA_EscapeRoom

Infection Prevention — My Mask Protects You & Me, Your Mask Protects Me & You



Wearing a mask is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While experts have been emphasizing that a cloth face covering protects *others* from potentially catching the virus when *you* breathe, cough, or sneeze, it turns out that masks do afford the wearer some protection after all. According to an updated scientific brief from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this month, **there's growing evidence that masks can decrease the amount of virus inhaled by the people wearing them**, and additional studies suggest it can also reduce the severity of illness if you do get sick with COVID-19. This only reinforces research demonstrating that masks reduce the risk of transmission by at least 70%—if everyone is masked and it's the right kind of mask. Outside of clinical settings, the CDC recommends cloth masks made of multiple layers with high thread counts, such as a tight-weave 100% cotton material.

Medication Safety — We Have a COVID-19 Vaccine. Now What?



Developing a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19 was just the first big hurdle.

Now we will have to get it to everyone, which is **a tremendous logistical challenge all its own**, made even more complicated by the unique transportation and storage requirements of one of the vaccine frontrunners from Pfizer. (The vaccine must be kept at minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit.) With millions of doses to deliver but a limited supply, healthcare workers and people in high-risk groups will be at the top of the list for vaccination. Shipments of the vaccine could begin as early as next month, and state and local health departments are already scrambling to get ready, preparing systems to track supplies and those who have been vaccinated—information which will all be fed into a national database. Existing immunization registries will be used to record what vaccine patients have received as well as which dose, as multiple vaccines will likely be available at some point, which won't be interchangeable. This effort could add an administrative burden to healthcare providers who are already overwhelmed by the increasing demands of the pandemic. And then, even when the myriad difficulties in distribution have been overcome, there comes what may be the biggest challenge of all: convincing people to take the vaccine.

Surgery — This Small Robot Offers a Big Payoff



Laparoscopic surgery, also known as “keyhole surgery,” is performing surgery through tiny incisions, leading to better outcomes and shorter recovery times. This minimally invasive surgery is often carried out with the assistance of a surgical robot, which are typically large, heavy, and expensive—until now. The new Versius Surgical Robotic System, offered by British company CMR Surgical, **is designed to be modular and mobile**, consisting of a fleet of individual robot arms manipulated by a surgeon as easily as playing a video game, complete with thumbstick controllers and 3D glasses. Since they can be wheeled around an operating table effortlessly during surgery, moved to different operating rooms as needed, and even shared among hospitals, the compact surgical tool can be deployed more strategically than bulkier units that are fixed to one location. This flexibility already has been useful during the pandemic, and being able to bring keyhole surgery to more patients, along with its many benefits, may even help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to patients or healthcare workers.

General Interest — Giving Thanks From Afar



The safest way to celebrate the upcoming Thanksgiving Day holiday with your extended family is over a video call. When you're done eating and discussing politics, it might be time to recover and cool things off with some traditional games. If you're drawing a blank on **fun group activities that you can play across a screen**, *PennLive* has suggestions, including time-honored classics such as Charades, Pictionary, Mafia, and even a scavenger hunt.

Long-Term Care — More Than Just a Job



Rosa María Gonzalez never dreamed of becoming a certified nursing assistant, but now she can't dream of giving it up. The 66-year-old CNA **refuses to retire from her job at the skilled nursing center** at Friendship Village in Tempe, Arizona, where lots of others live in their retirement, even during the height of a pandemic that puts her at as much risk for COVID-19 as the residents she cares for. She has spent the last 14 years of her career there, a career she essentially stumbled into almost 30 years ago, when she thought she was applying to be a housekeeper at a convalescent home and got into the wrong line. Although her four children have been encouraging her for a while to retire, she says now isn't the time, and no one at Friendship Village wants to see her go. Rosa's story, from growing up in Mexico City to emigrating to the United States and finding love, a family, and a calling, is a heartwarming profile of a born caregiver.



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