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## Getting Tired of Singing “Happy Birthday”? Here’s an Alternative!

A lot of us have been working from home for months. As our workplaces open up, we might begin to feel pretty jumpy! Hiding out in our homes felt safe, and now we’re anxious about going forth. Ohio State University researchers say this uncertainty and unpredictability may trigger a lot of fear and stress. They recommend that we reduce this anxiety with lifestyle changes such as getting enough sleep, exercise and healthy foods.

OSU’s chief wellness officer Bernadette Melnyk offers one more clever tip that can help us kill two birds with one stone while sanitizing our hands. “While you wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, take the opportunity to take five deep, abdominal breaths,” she says. “Doing this at least five times a day can reduce anxiety and even lower your blood pressure.”





## Health Care During the Pandemic

*Information from The National Council on Aging (NCOA.org).*

Hospitals across the country report that emergency department (ED) visits have declined significantly for illnesses not related to COVID-19. In particular, heart attacks and strokes appear to be going unchecked. Some hospitals also observe a decline in fall-related ED visits.

Doctors believe that people are so scared of contracting COVID-19 that they're not seeking help for life-threatening ailments. Nationwide, nearly a third of adults say that they have delayed or avoided medical care because they are concerned about contracting COVID-19, according to a poll from the American College of Emergency Physicians. Nearly 75% of poll respondents also expressed concern about overstressing the health care system; more than half worried they won't be able to see a doctor.

### Strokes and heart attacks demand immediate attention

While stay-at-home guidance is a critical part of reducing the spread of COVID-19, if you are having symptoms of a stroke or heart attack or have experienced a fall and suffered a fracture, broken bone, or brain injury, it is important to seek medical care right away.

For strokes, in order for clot busters—medicines that break up clots and prevent long-term problems like paralysis—to work, or for surgeries to be successful, it's crucial to get to the hospital within 3 hours after the first symptoms appear. Some patients are not eligible for treatments if they get to the hospital too late.

Heart attack victims also may suffer more if care is delayed. A report in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology looked at treatment of heart attack patients



in March 2020, when COVID-19 cases were climbing, compared to the previous year and found a 38% reduction in patients being treated for a life-threatening event known as a STEMI—the blockage of one of the major arteries that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the heart, which results in a serious type of heart attack.

### The bottom line

The bottom line is that hospitals have safety measures in place to protect us from infections and have allocated beds for patients with non-COVID illnesses. If you are experiencing symptoms of a stroke or heart attack or if you've had a fall and suspect an injury, don't delay care.



