



National Indian Health Board  
**NATIONAL TRIBAL  
COVID-19 RESPONSE**

910 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE | Washington, D.C. 20003 | 202-507-4070 | [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org)

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## Caution Fatigue during the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Alert Fatigue

- With the overload of information from social media or news sources on the pandemic, people are constantly receiving alerts and updates.
- Being flooded with varying information may cause you to struggle in deciding what information is actually useful. This can be very stressful.
- To reduce the stress, a person may become desensitized, or start to ignore these alerts and view them as ‘noise’ or nuisances.



### Caution Fatigue

- This is when a person understands the actions needed to be cautious and protect their health, but are willing to stop doing them because they think it is just too exhausting.
- Thinking about higher risk actions (going to the store, taking a walk, going to the dentist, etc.) and the precautions needed to do them (e.g., filling out screening forms, wearing masks, remaining 6 feet from other people, getting a temperature taken) takes up a lot of mental energy, and just feels exhausting and overwhelming. Because of this burden, people become more easily influenced to bend the rules/guidance, or just ignore them.
- It can be especially difficult to stay motivated to be cautious when nobody within a person’s circle has gotten sick.





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## Do You Have Caution Fatigue?

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### Ask yourself:

- Do I understand the risk of getting sick in my area, but choose to not take precautions or continuously forget about precautions I was taking at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Have I stopped looking for updates on the pandemic or find alerts annoying?
- Have I stopped reminding my friends and family to take preventative measures?



## How Do You Fight It?

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- Try reframing why you are taking precautions:
  - “I am being cautious to make sure my [grandparent, parent, etc.] doesn’t get sick.”
  - “If I am cautious now, my reward is better health in the future.”
- Remind yourself of the habits and routines you had at the beginning of the pandemic. You did it then, you can do it again!
- When you forget to follow a guideline immediately correct it. Do not allow yourself to make excuses for yourself.
  - For example, if you forget your mask, go back and get it as soon as you remember.
- Make it easier for you to follow rules and guidances.
  - For example, put extra masks in your cars, on your bikes, in your bags, so that you don’t forget them. Consider, only going to places when they are least crowded so staying physically distanced is easier and not something to constantly focus on.
- Look for a variety of news sources. If you read different forms of news, you will be more likely to see it as “new” and pay attention.

## Resources and Citations

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<https://www.breastcancer.org/community/podcasts/quarantine-fatigue-20200618>

<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2020/04/caution-fatigue-could-dent-efforts-to-stay-safe/>

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/are-you-experiencing-coronavirus-quarantine-fatigue/>

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