

Covid 19 for Parents

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1. Provide information that is honest, accurate and developmentally appropriate to answer the question “What is COVID-19?”

COVID-19 is the short name for “coronavirus disease 2019.” It is a new virus. Doctors and scientists are still learning about it.

Recently, this virus has made a lot of people sick. Scientists and doctors think that most people will be ok, especially kids, but some people might get pretty sick.

Doctors and health experts are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids actually seem to have milder symptoms.

2. Remain calm and reassuring

Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they’ll catch it. Emphasize the safety precautions that you and your family are taking.

Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others

3. Make yourself available to listen and to talk

Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

Not talking about something can actually make kids worry *more*. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone.

fact-based information is likely more reassuring than whatever they’re hearing from their friends or on the news

Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It’s okay if you can’t answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.

Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more.

4. Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online

Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

5. Stick to routine

We don't like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now. Structured days with regular mealtimes, walks and bedtimes are essential

6. Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs

Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.

Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.

Get children into a handwashing habit.

7. Deal with your own anxiety

Do not talk to your kids when you're feeling most anxious or panicked.

If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.

Model Mindful Responses: "I'm frustrated so I'm going to take a walk."

8. Guide children in calming activities – see attached

