

Talking to Children about COVID-19



Concern over the COVID-19 virus can make children anxious and worried. Keep in mind that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful situations. The following tips can help reassure them and provide age-appropriate information as well as how they can help avoid infection. This can give them a sense of control, helping to reduce their anxiety.

Above all, make yourself available to listen and to talk, whenever they have questions.



Remain calm and reassuring.

Children will react to what and how you say things, and can pick up cues from overheard conversations with others.



Avoid using blaming language.

Remember that viruses can make anyone sick. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.



Pay attention to what children see or hear on TV, radio or social media.

Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Remind them that some stories about COVID-19 on the internet or social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.



Teach and model everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

This includes avoiding people who are coughing or sneezing or sick, reminding them to cough or sneeze into their elbow or tissue and to throw the tissue into the trash, and about using hand sanitizer.

Keep reading for more tips.



Provide truthful, simple, age-appropriate information.

Here are useful phrases:

- **COVID-19 is the short name for “coronavirus disease 2019.”** It is a new virus. Doctors and scientists are still learning about it.
- **This virus has made a lot of people sick.** Scientists and doctors think that most people will be okay, especially kids, but some people might get pretty sick.
- **Doctors and health experts are working hard** to help people stay healthy.
- **You can practice healthy habits to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19,** like washing your hands while singing happy birthday twice, and keeping things clean (older children can help with disinfecting commonly touched objects), sneezing or coughing into a tissue, and not touching your eyes, mouth and nose. This can help keep germs out of your body.
- **For many people, being sick with COVID-19 is a little like having the flu with a fever, cough or having trouble taking deep breaths.** From what doctors have seen so far, most children don't seem to get very sick. While a lot of adults get sick, most adults get better.
- **If you do get sick, it doesn't mean you have COVID-19.** People can get sick from all kinds of germs. Remember, if you do get sick, the adults in your life will help get you any help that you need.



For more information, visit:

CDC

<https://bit.ly/2XFXFjp>

<https://bit.ly/2z0nRL6>



National Association of School Psychologists

<https://go.aws/2Ve6HSR>