

TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT COVID-19



With change happening so quickly in the wake of COVID-19's spread in the United States, your children may be confused, or even scared, about what is happening right now. Give your kids space to process their feelings and ask questions that can help them feel a little less overwhelmed. So how do you talk to your kids about the coronavirus pandemic? And what you can do to help them cope at home?

Keep explanations age appropriate.

If your children are young, you may be able to keep it simple. Explain that a virus is going around that is making people sick. For them, it might feel like a regular cold or fever, but for other people who are more vulnerable, it can be more serious. For older kids who have more access to news and social media, you may want to help correct misinformation they might have heard.

Reassure them they are safe.

Having your school close down and being told you have to stay at home can be scary. Use a reassuring tone when you talk about the changes to provide an emotional cue. Let them know they don't need to worry and that grown ups are working hard on a solution.

Emphasize what they can do to help.

It's easy to feel helpless when things are out of your control. Help your children understand what they can control to help the situation:

Practice social distancing.

Stay 6 feet away from others if you do go in public, but mostly try to stay home. It may be hard for kids to understand why they can't go see their friends, but explaining how germs can hop from person to person may help.

Wash your hands.

Teach your children proper handwashing. Maybe even make up your own song to sing while washing up.

Cover your cough in your elbow.

Coughing into your hands or with no covering at all can spread germs more easily!

Stay home if you feel sick.

Encourage your children to let you know if they feel sick.

Continue healthy habits.

Eating healthy foods, going on hikes with your family, and keeping brains active with learning can all contribute to staying healthy at home.

TIPS FOR HELPING KIDS COPE AT HOME

Set a schedule



Kids are used to keeping a schedule. Parents with children at home can set a new daily schedule that brings a sense of normalcy to their children and helps them accomplish necessary tasks.

Focus on the positive



Make time to enjoy fun activities with your children. Small children love story time, playing games and arts and crafts. The whole family can enjoy boardgames, movies or preparing meals together.

Keep them active



Kids have a lot of energy. Give them a chance to burn it off by taking family walks, riding bikes or creating an obstacle course in the back yard. Exercise is a great stress reliever and fresh air does a body good.

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