

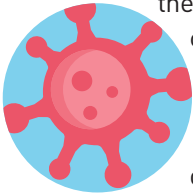
Talking to kids about COVID-19

Words matter

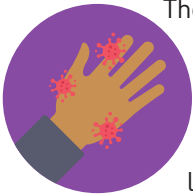
Kids are hearing about COVID-19 daily. Take the time to sit down with them to define what it is, using language appropriate for their ages. Start your conversation by asking children, “What do you think coronavirus or COVID-19 is?” This gives you an understanding of what they know, think they know or how they interpret the illness. Terms you might want to think about explaining are:

COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus called the coronavirus. A virus is a tiny germ that can enter your body and make you sick. This is what happens when you have a cold; there is a virus in your body. Most people who have COVID-19 have a cough or fever, their body hurts, or they even say they can't smell or taste anything anymore.

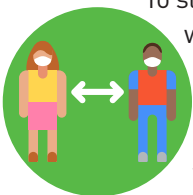


The most common way the coronavirus can enter people's bodies is by the virus being on their hands when they touch their mouth, nose or eyes. The reason you are hearing so much about this coronavirus lately is because it's a new virus that has never been seen before, and it's affecting people all over the world. Doctors and scientists are working every day to learn more about it and about ways to stop it from making more people sick.



Social distancing

To slow the spread of COVID-19, we're all being asked to do a thing called social distancing. This means that when we are away from home, we should not



get too close to others. Pretend there is a bike separating you and the person you are standing by. Instead of giving high-fives, fist bumps or hugs to people outside of our family, you can smile and wave hello.

Quarantining

If someone gets sick with COVID-19 or is around someone who has it, that person needs to quarantine. That means staying at home, and not seeing anyone else until they are better.



Masks

A mask is a way to help stop more people from getting sick. Sometimes, people who have COVID-19 don't even feel like they are sick, but they could still be getting others sick. When you breathe, cough or sneeze, your germs could spread to others, and a mask helps stop those germs. Just to be safe, we should all wear masks when we are around others.



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Stay positive

Even the youngest children can get nervous and anxious when surrounded by negative feelings and stressful conversations. The following might help keep children calm and feeling safe:



- Take care of your own mental health. Kids look to you for security. The more secure you feel, the better they will be.
- Explain things honestly and matter-of-factly. Give them answers to their questions, but resist the need to tell them everything and to talk about the virus constantly.
- Remind them that there have been many other illnesses in the past, and health care professionals worked until they discovered cures and vaccinations. Progress is taking place all the time.
- Don't have television and radio reports on continuously. They can be overwhelming for everyone.
- Limit kids' exposure to the news and social media, especially pertaining to COVID-19.
- Stay informed, using reliable sources. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, the Mayo Clinic, state health departments and your school district's communications can be helpful.

