



Talking with Children about Covid-19

As public conversations around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear. CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.



Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

- ❖ Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of race or ethnicity. Avoid assumptions about who might have Covid-19.
- ❖ Pay attention to what children see or hear on TV, radio, or online. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.



Provide information that is honest and accurate.

- ❖ Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
- ❖ Talk to children about how some stories on Covid-19 on the internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.



Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

- ❖ Remind children to stay away from people who are 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 the handwashing habit
 - Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
 - If soap and water aren't available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol and supervise young children to prevent swallowing alcohol.

Facts about Covid-19 for discussions with children

Try to keep information simple and remind them that health and school officials are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy.

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 help people stay healthy.

What can I do so that I don't get COVID-19?

- You can practice healthy habits at home, school, and play to help protect against the spread of COVID-19:
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. If you sneeze or cough into a tissue, throw it in the trash right away.
 - Keep your hands out of your mouth, nose, and eyes. This will help keep germs out of your body.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Follow these five steps—wet, lather (make bubbles), scrub (rub together), rinse and dry. You can sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
 - If you don't have soap and water, have an adult help you use a special hand cleaner.
 - Keep things clean. Older children can help adults at home and school clean the things we touch the most, like desks, doorknobs, light switches, and remote controls. (Note for adults: you can find more information about cleaning and disinfecting on CDC's website.)
 - If you feel sick, stay home. Just like you don't want to get other people's germs in your body, other people don't want to get your germs either.

What happens if you get sick with COVID-19?

- COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems. 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. If you suspect your child may have COVID-19, call the healthcare facility to let them know **before** you bring your child in to see them.