

MANAGING ANXIETY IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Tips for talking with your child about COVID-19

BE PREPARED



Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background and experiences. Try to process any fears you may have before you talk to your children. When parents and caregivers deal with stress calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children

TAKE NOTICE

- Excessive crying, sadness, worry, or irritation
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (i.e. accidents or bedwetting)
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Difficulty with attention and concentration



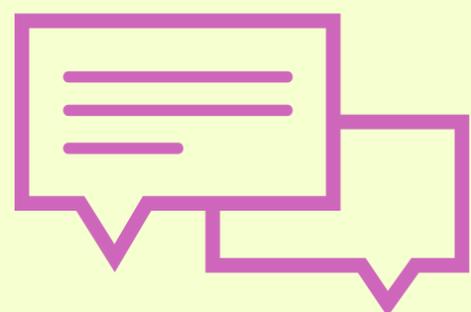
OFFER SUPPORT



- Answer questions and share facts with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak in a way they can understand.
- Reassure your child that they are safe.
- Share with them how you deal with your stress so that they can learn how to cope from you
- Limit your family's exposure to news, including social media.
- Don't dismiss your child's fears. Validate their emotions without increasing anxiety.
- Try to maintain a routine as much as you possibly can
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.
- Help your child label their emotions to reduce the intensity of the emotion. Normalize that whatever they're feeling is ok.

WHAT TO SAY

- "It sounds like you are feeling is scared, could that be true?"
- "There's lots of different viruses, like when your tummy hurts. Coronavirus is another type of virus"
- "If you ever have questions, talk to me"
- "Scientists all around the world are trying to figure out how to keep people safe and healthy"
- "We get sick by spreading germs, so that's why we make sure to wash our hands"
- "Most people who have caught the virus have not died, just like with the flu. Doctors want to make sure everyone gets the help they need"



SOURCES:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/11-tips-for-managing-your-anxiety-during-coronavirus-from-therapist-2020-3#10-externalize-your-anxiety-10>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/parenting/coronavirus-kids-talk.html>