

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Tips to help children during a quarantine

People deal with stress in different ways, and children and teens may respond more intensely to it than others. Helping your child learn ways to manage stress is important, especially given the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19.

It's important for parents to recognize when their children may be experiencing stress. Signs may include:

- Changes in eating or sleeping
- Alcohol, tobacco or other drug use
- Acting clingy, withdrawn or anxious
- Trouble paying attention or concentrating
- Headaches or other body aches with no explanation
- Withdrawing from school or activities they used to enjoy
- Going back to behaviors they've grown out of, like bedwetting
- Excessive crying or being irritable, as well as "acting out" such as outbursts of anger

If you and your household are under quarantine — whether self-quarantine or otherwise — here are some tips to help support your children during this time.

1. **Share information.** Talk with your children about COVID-19 explaining things at their level. Listen and answer any questions they may have.
2. **Help them feel secure.** Be reassuring about their safety. Validate their feelings — it is OK to feel upset. You can also share how you manage stress to help them learn from you.
3. **Define boundaries.** Limit exposure to news coverage. This includes social media. Make sure your children know they can ask questions at any time.
4. **Create regular routines.** If there is a school closure, set a regular schedule for learning, making sure to include fun activities, too.
5. **Set a good example.** Show your children ways to stay healthy during a quarantine. Maintain healthy eating habits, and get plenty of rest and physical activity.
6. **Stay connected.** Establish how you'll communicate with friends and family through available methods — text, phone calls, over the internet or even through letters in the mail.

If you are concerned about how stress may be affecting your child, speak with your child's doctor for guidance.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Manage Stress & Anxiety. Accessed: 3/18/20. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

National Institute of Health: How to Prepare. Accessed: 3/18/20. <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

World Health Organization: Tip Sheet "Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak." Accessed: 3/17/20.

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

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