



We can all feel overwhelmed by the current Covid-19 situation. Children may be finding this difficult to cope with depending on what they are seeing and hearing. To support our children it is important for adults to have open, supportive and ongoing discussions with them.



Here are some useful tips for talking with children about Covid-19:

- Be aware of your own emotional state and show how best to cope at this time. Speak calmly and try not to seem upset. Children pick up on their parents/carers worries.
- Ask children what they know? (What do you know about Coronavirus? Or, what do you know about the new sickness going around?). Check whether they are worried or confused.
- Follow your child's lead. Some children will want to spend time talking. If they don't, or don't have a lot of questions that's ok.
- Provide clear, simple facts that help young people understand this is something that can affect a lot of people in the world and we are going to try and keep safe. Help them understand how they can stay safe at this time (e.g. handwashing).
- If your child asks something that you don't know, be truthful and say that.
- Try to reassure them (e.g. children don't seem to get as sick as adults). Remind them they can always come to talk to you when they are feeling worried.
- Support children to talk to family and friends they are not living with at this time. Children often worry more about others than themselves. Video chat and telephone calls can help them feel re-assured that loved ones are safe.
- Children may look for their own information. Show them where they will find clear information (so they don't find shows or information that scare them). Newsround (for children age 6/7 years and above) uses child friendly language to explain Covid19.
- Help children to understand the news stories. For example, some people only feel like they have the cold or flu and don't feel very sick at all.
- Talk about things that are happening to keep people safe and healthy. For example, hospital and doctors are preparing to treat people who get sick. Scientists are working on a vaccine.
- Let your child know that it is ok to feel anxious at this time. Anxiety can be a useful feeling (making us more aware to wash our hands, not touch our face etc.)

Here are some other useful links:

- ♦ <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>
- ♦ <https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/guidance-advice/talking-to-children-about-coronavirus/>
- ♦ <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/blog/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus>