##

## HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH CORONA VIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

**Your children may respond differently to news of an outbreak depending on their age. Below are some reactions according to age group and the best ways you can respond:**

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| AGE GROUP | REACTIONS | HOW TO HELP |
| PRESCHOOL | Fear of being alone, bad dreams Speech difficultiesLoss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wettingChange in appetiteIncreased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors | Patience and toleranceProvide reassurance (verbal and physical)Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangementsPlan calming, comforting activities before bedtime Maintain regular family routinesAvoid media exposure |
| SCHOOL-AGE(ages 6-12) | Irritability, whining, aggressive behaviorClinging, nightmares Sleep/appetite disturbancePhysical symptoms (headaches, stomachachesWithdrawal from peers, loss of interestCompetition for parents’ attentionForgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school | Patience, tolerance, and reassurancePlay sessions and staying in touch with friends through telephone and Internet Regular exercise and stretchingEngage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games) Participate in structured household choresSet gentle but firm limitsDiscuss the current outbreak and encourage questions. Include what is being done in the family and communityEncourage expression through play and conversationHelp family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routinesLimit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at schoolAddress any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation |
| ADOLESCENT(ages 13-18) | Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.)Sleep/appetite disturbanceAgitation or decrease in energy, apathyIgnoring health promotion behaviorsIsolating from peers and loved onesConcerns about stigma and injusticesAvoiding/cutting school | Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Encourage continuation of routinesEncourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force)Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video gamesParticipate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviorsLimit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at schoolDiscuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak |

## SEEKING ADDITIONAL HELP

If you or a loved one is having a difficult time coping with the outbreak and want to seek outside help, there are ways to get that help. For example:

Get support regarding your anxiety or stress by speaking to a trained counselor at SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or by texting TalkWithUS 66746.

Contact your physician or your insurance company (if they have a consultation line) to ask health-related questions or to seek mental health support.

Learn more ways to help your family. Additional resources can be accessed at: [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org/)

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org/)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html)

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THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org/) 5

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