

LifeSolutions

Supporting your children during COVID-19



Children and teens react to situations partly on how they see adults respond. When you deal with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic calmly and confidently, you provide your children important support. For you to be more reassuring to your children, you need to be prepared.¹

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Here are some common changes:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

There are many ways to support your child:

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts in a way that your child can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is OK if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.

- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. Create a schedule for education and fun.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect virtually with your friends and family members.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Manage Stress & Anxiety*. [www.cdc.gov. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html). Updated March 14, 2020. Accessed March 23, 2020.