

## **Advice for parents and carers of young children**

### **What is coronavirus?**

You will have heard lots on the news and social media about coronavirus, also known as Covid-19. Covid-19 was first identified in China, but has now spread to many other countries.

Covid-19 is a new illness and so the NHS and other organisations around the world are still learning about how it is spread and how to prevent it.

Covid-19 may be like the flu and spread when you cough or sneeze.

The best way to prevent Covid-19 from spreading is to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, including before you eat and after you have used the toilet. It is also recommended to wash your hands when you arrive at a location e.g. home or school.

If you cough or sneeze, it is recommended that you cover your hand and mouth with a tissue, put the tissue in the bin and then wash your hands.

If you cannot wash your hands you can use hand sanitizer, although this is not as effective.

### **What does it look like when someone has Covid-19?**

The most common symptoms of Covid-19 are similar to those of the normal flu:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Trouble breathing normally (e.g. a tight chest)

If you do have these symptoms, it does not mean that you have Covid-19. However, you and your family will need to stay at home for two weeks. This is called self-isolation and helps stop it from spreading.

If you suspect you may have Covid-19, you can seek further support and information from the online 111 service: <https://111.nhs.uk/>

For up to date information about Covid-19 please see the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Please find enclosed some child-friendly resources that may help you to explain Covid-19 to your child.

## **Managing anxiety about Coronavirus**

Children and young people may respond to stress in different ways such as being anxious, withdrawn, angry or more clingy than usual. They may also want to ask lots of questions, particularly if they have heard people talking at school, on social media or in the news.

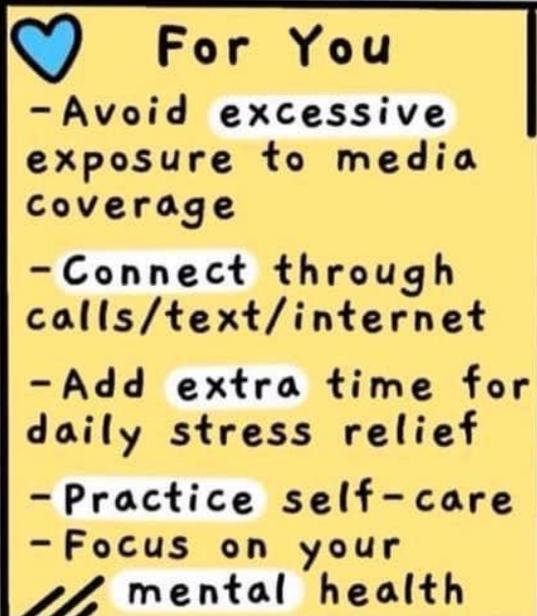
Where possible respond to reactions in a supportive way and listen to their concerns and offer reassurance. Encourage your child to relax and play and maybe offer activities to keep them busy, distracted and entertained. Try and keep to your normal routines where possible or encourage new ones for play and learning. If your child is unable to go to school, it will be helpful to try and maintain some of your normal routines; encouraging them to get up and dressed at the normal times, complete home learning activities during the day and having appropriate breaks for social and leisure time. It may be helpful to use technology, such as video chat, to help them keep in touch with their friends where possible.

Share facts about what you know and explain what is going on, giving clear information and what they can do to reduce the risks.

It is helpful to normalise children's anxieties as we are all unsure about the outbreak; feeling stressed and anxious are normal reactions when we are uncertain or don't feel safe.

Below are some more ideas to help you and your child / young person:

# MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



♥ For You

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

BlessingManifesting



For Kids

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure



For Quarantine/Isolation

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

We have included some resources to use with your child, which will build resilience and emotional literacy and hopefully make relaxing fun. These could be nice activities to do together as a family.

There are also really helpful resources to help plan for staying at home or indoors and for taking care of your mental health and wellbeing at:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing>