





Talking to your kids and teens about what's happening


Talking with loved ones about COVID-19 can feel daunting. But with children of all ages home from school and potentially worried or scared about coronavirus, it's more important than ever to communicate clearly. Here are a few tips and guidelines for navigating the conversation. For more information and additional parent resources, please visit [rwjbh.org/covid19](https://www.rwjbh.org/covid19)

- **1 Start the conversation**

The most important part of communicating with your child is also the most basic – simply start talking. If you're watching or listening to the news with your children, discuss it afterwards. Ask questions - how are they feeling? What are they worried about? What have they heard through their friends? Social distancing shouldn't mean social isolation. Let your kids know that you're there to talk things through.
- **2 Know the facts**

With misinformation and myths floating around the internet, it can be hard to know what's true. Utilize resources from physicians and trustworthy authorities. Know the basic facts, especially as they concern your child's risk: while children can get sick from coronavirus, their symptoms tend to be extremely mild.
- **3 Listen to your child**

After you start the conversation, take time to truly listen. We often don't know what fears or concerns our children are dealing with until we ask – they may be worried about something entirely unexpected. Listening well and without interruption is one of the best ways to show your child that they have a support network in uncertain times.
- **4 Stay calm and positive**

Communicate calmly and positively. Take a deep breath before starting the conversation, and maybe start with a compliment. Positive feedback is crucial, especially when so much of the news is negative or scary.
- **5 Turn off the TV**

The 24/7 news cycle can be overwhelming for anyone, especially children. Set aside time as a family to turn off the TV and put down your phones. Eat a meal together or schedule time to speak with friends and family members virtually.

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