

BACKGROUND

Although the number of reported 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in children remains low across the nation, it is important to communicate information to your children about diseases like the coronavirus. Parents, family members, school staff and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate and minimizes anxiety or fear.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The Department of Health (DOH) will continue to monitor COVID-19 and deliver updates to the public. The department is working with local, state and federal officials, along with health care partners, about the potential spread of the coronavirus.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Make yourself available to listen and to talk.** Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions or to express their fears.
- **Avoid large crowds and traveling.** We strongly encourage the suspension of large gatherings, events, conferences and traveling to recreational activities like gyms, movie theaters and shopping malls.
- **Continue to encourage healthy habits.** Practice good self-care to ensure your body is getting the proper nutrients from fruits, vegetables and getting enough sleep.



HOW CAN YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN?

- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Children are often trusting with adults. It is important to lead by example and remain calm to not pass fear.
- **Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.** This is an opportunity to create healthy habits. Remind children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow and to wash their hands frequently while singing “Happy Birthday” twice, or for 20 seconds.
- **Keep it simple while providing accurate information.** Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
- **Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.** Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- **If you, your child in your family is sick, stay home until you are feeling better.** In addition, frequently clean commonly touched surfaces in your home such as countertops, light switches and cell phones.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

DOH – <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics – <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/#Information>