COVID-19 Checklist for Talking To Kids
Responding to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic can be overwhelming for parents and concerning to children. Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH, recommends that parents and others who work with young people strive to help them feel understood, empowered, and hopeful. She offers the below guidelines.

- Remind children that doctors and healthcare workers are learning as much as they can about the virus as quickly as possible and are doing what they can to keep everyone safe.
- Reassure children that they are safe. Let them know it is OK if they feel upset.
- Help children label strong emotions and understand how those emotions might drive them to act in unhelpful ways.
- Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope. Help them discover what works for them to address stress (activities that build skills versus activities that help them escape).
- Limit children’s exposure to media coverage of the pandemic. Discuss what they are hearing on the news or through social media and correct any misinformation or rumors you may hear. Keep young children away from frightening images they may see on TV, social media, computers, etc.
- Discuss ways to maintain a sense of structure. See Setting a New Routine.
- Ask children about their ideas for connecting remotely with friends and family members. Encourage contact through electronic communications, phone calls, letters, and other safe ways to engage.
- Discuss examples of people, including young people, who are trying to help others during the pandemic or sharing messages of hope. Participate in a community response, such as chalking the sidewalk, creating rainbows, or hanging hearts in windows. Set a good example by showing empathy and support to those who are ill.
- Remind children that lifestyle changes and stressors are temporary and that some sense of normalcy will return when it is safe.
Discuss with children the importance of washing hands often, coughing into a tissue, and getting enough sleep. Inform them of COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available. Call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 (1-800-846-8517 TTY); connect with a trained counselor through the Ohio Crisis Text Line by texting the keyword “4HOPE” to 741 741; or call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services help line at 1-877-275-6364 to find resources in your community.

Additional resources:
American Academy of Pediatrics Parenting Website: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx.
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Disaster Distress Helpline: Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 Ohio Department of Health

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

For additional information call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

- STAY HOME
- PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING
- GET ADEQUATE SLEEP AND EAT WELL-BALANCED MEALS
- WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)
- DRY HANDS WITH A CLEAN TOWEL OR AIR DRY YOUR HANDS
- COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN COUGHING OR SNEEZING
- AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES
- CLEAN AND DISINFECT "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES OFTEN
- CALL BEFORE VISITING YOUR DOCTOR
- PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE HABITS

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov