COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS

EXPLAINED TO PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Based on the World Health Organisation guidelines

Little hands matter

unicef
for every child
FIRST THINGS FIRST

WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS OR COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illnesses that are known to cause infections that impact on your lungs and your breathing. These include the common cold, flu and serious forms of pneumonia.

The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19 and it was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

SYMPTOMS (signs of infection)

The symptoms (the signs that show that a person may be infected with the virus) are very similar to that of a common cold or flu. It may include signs such as fever, feeling tired, coughing, aches and pains, nasal congestion (also called a stuffy nose), runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea (a runny tummy). If you, your child or any family member show any of these signs, please seek medical attention.

DO NOT PANIC

Your health care practitioner will do the necessary examinations, tests and provide you with all the information that you need.

IMPORTANT

Do not self-medicate! Call your clinic or doctor ahead of your visit or the National Institute Communicable Diseases (NICD) hotline:

0800 029 999

See page 9 how to explain coronavirus disease COVID-19 to your child.

Did you know?

Most people, about 8 in every 10, recover from this disease without getting very ill or needing special treatment.
It starts with your HANDS

What is so special about our HANDS?

MOST infections are spread through your hands and the hands of others. That is why keeping your hands clean is the easiest and most effective way to prevent you picking up germs and viruses that will make you ill.

WASH your HANDS regularly with soap and water

Handwashing with soap and running water is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and viruses.

Wash your hands often with soap and running water for 20 seconds.

The easiest way to know how long 20 seconds are, is to sing ‘happy birthday’ two times or to sing the first verse of our national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika.

When washing your hands with soap and running water, you should not open the tap fully. Be wise with the water usage when using this method.

Did you know?

Regularly washing your bare hands with soap and running water offers more protection against catching the COVID-19 virus than wearing rubber gloves. (World Health Organisation)

REMEMBER

Wash your hands with soap and water — and assist your child to wash his or her hands properly with soap and water.

This will not only help with the prevention of diseases but also create healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

I and my other coronavirus family members are very scared of soap and water!

Look on page 10 for the 6 steps of handwashing.
More about your HANDS

From the HANDS to the EYES, MOUTH AND NOSE

When our hands are not clean and we touch our (or other people’s) eyes, nose or mouth - we spread germs and viruses.

Try to avoid touching your or your child’s eyes, nose or mouth unnecessarily, and if you must, wash your hands before you touch these areas.

Teach this to your child from a young age. Another healthy habit that will last a lifetime.

Did you know?

Our hands touch many surfaces and objects every day. This is how germs and viruses get from these surfaces and objects to our hands – and then when we touch our eyes, nose or mouth, these germs and viruses enter our bodies.

Don’t touch the T-zone

Never put your fingers in or on your...

- eyes,
- nose or
- mouth
Even more about your HANDS

From HAND TO HAND

When we greet each other, we often do that by shaking hands or hugging. It is time to learn a new way of greeting that will help us to protect ourselves from germs and viruses.

It is called the ‘elbow greet’.

DO IT LIKE THIS:
1. Bend your arm and **extend your elbow** to the person that you want to greet.
2. He or she should **do the same**.
3. Then you greet **by touching elbows. It’s cool.**
4. And we should **teach our children** to do the same.

Here are other cool non-contact ways to greet:
- wave
- namaste (is a slight bow and hands pressed together)
- foot shake

A quick summary about HANDS

- Most infections are spread through your **hands** and the hands of others.
- Wash your **hands** regularly with soap and running water for **20 seconds**.
- When our **hands** are not clean and we touch our (or other people’s) eyes, nose or mouth we spread germs and viruses.
- Greet with the ELBOW greet. Do not shake **hands**.

COVID-19 just loves to meet other people. I then can go and visit their bodies too.
COUGHS AND SNEEZES

CATCH your cough or sneeze
When we cough and sneeze, droplets leave our mouths and noses into the air – about one meter around us.

If you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or tissue. Remember to throw the tissue away in closed dustbin after using it.

Teach your child to do the same when he or she coughs or sneezes.

I am COVID-19 and I can travel for a short distance from your mouth and nose when you cough.

REMEMBER
Wash your hands with soap and clean water every time after you have coughed or sneezed. And teach your child the same habit. Another healthy habit to learn from an early age.

If you COUGH or SNEEZE cover your nose and mouth with a tissue please

OR

Into your elbow, please!

Now these are smart ways to put a travel ban on me and other viruses or germs.

Little hands matter
ONE METER DISTANCE

Keep at least one (1) meter distance between yourself and anyone coughing and sneezing. The droplets from a sneeze or cough cannot travel that far in the air!

Avoid touching people unnecessarily. This is also called social distancing.

Even if I am in the droplets that leave your mouth, I cannot travel that far by air.

AVOID CROWDED PLACES

In crowded places like shopping centres, places of worship, community gatherings, and others, we are very close to other people. Lots of people touch the same surfaces that we do, coughs and sneezes and are very close to us. This creates opportunities for germs and viruses to spread very quickly.

If you can, avoid these places or go at times when there are not many people.

I love crowded places. It makes it easy for me to visit other people.
WHEN YOU FEEL SICK

STAY AT HOME WHEN SICK
If you feel sick or your child feels sick – stay at home. In this way you protect yourself, your child as well as other people. Remember to seek medical help immediately as well.

Do not go back to work if you have not fully recovered or send your child back to the early childhood development programme or school before he or she as not fully recovered.

IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAVE COVID-19 (the new Coronavirus)

If your health care practitioner confirms that you or your child has the COVID-19 (newest Coronavirus), DO NOT PANIC. They will tell you what to do and prescribe any medication that you or your child may need.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:
1. Eat healthily (this helps the body to fight the virus)
2. Drink lots of fluid (water)
3. Avoid contact with other people (in this way we prevent other people from getting the virus too)
4. Speak to your child about his or her illness in a calm and comforting manner
5. Stay at home until fully recovered
6. Monitor the symptoms. If it gets worse contact your health care practitioner

As COVID-19, I show the signs of infection that are very similar to that of my other family members – the common cold or flu.
TALK to your YOUNG CHILD about the CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Be willing to talk. Your young child is curious and attentive. They will already have heard something. Silence and secrets do not protect our children. Honesty and openness do. Think about how much they will understand. You know them best.

Your child may ask (many) questions. And even if your child does not ask questions or are too young to ask questions, you will notice that he or she is still curious about the changes happening in their world (and your response to it).

There are a lot of stories going around. Some may not be true. Get the correct information about the coronavirus (COVID-19). Speak accurately about the risk from COVID-19, based facts and latest official health advice (see pages 2 and 11).

Be open and listen. Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know.

Be honest. Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand. Discuss the issues simply and in a calm manner. Remember young children often understand complicated issues better if we explain it to them in a concrete manner.

It is OK not to know the answers. It is fine to say “We don’t know, but we are working on it; or we don’t know, ‘but we think’.” Use this as an opportunity to learn something new with your child!

Be supportive. Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

Heroes not bullies. Explain that COVID-19 has nothing to do with the way someone looks, where they are from, or what language they speak. Tell your child that we can be compassionate to people who are sick and those who are caring for them. Look for stories of people who are working to stop the outbreak and are caring for sick people.

End on a good note. Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can talk to you anytime. Then do something fun together!

COVID-19 coronavirus explained to parents of young children

HEALTHY HABITS

START HERE

1. Wet your hands with clean water and soap

2. Rub your palms together to scrub

3. Rub between your fingers

4. Clean underneath your nails

5. Wash the back of your hands

6. Rinse your hands with clean water

Wash hands in 20 seconds
There are a lot of stories going around. Some may not be true. On this page you will find information of websites and telephone numbers where you will find the correct information.

**WEBSITES**

**Government’s general website**
www.gov.za/Coronavirus

More information on -
**Lockdown**
https://sacoronavirus.co.za/2020/03/23/south-african-lockdown-guidelines-information/

**Frequently Asked Questions -Covid-19**
www.gov.za/coronavirus/faq

**Schools**
www.gov.za/Coronavirus/schools

**Hospitals**
www.gov.za/Coronavirus/hospitals

**Social Grants**
www.gov.za/coronavirus/socialgrants

**Department of Social Development**
www.dsd.gov.za/

**Department of Health**
https://sacoronavirus.co.za/

**National Institute for Communicable Diseases**
http://www.nicd.ac.za/

**World Health Organisation (WHO)**
**Parenting in the time of COVID-19**

**UNICEF**
https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19

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**CALL CENTRES & HOTLINES**

**Emergency number (COVID-19)**
0800 029 999

**Gender-based Violence Command Centre:**
0800 428 428 or *120*7867# (free)

**Persons with disabilities**
SMS “HELP” to 31531

**Childline**
08000 55 555 (free)

**Department of Education**
0800 202 933

**SASSA (grants)**
0800 60 10 11

**AIDS help line**
0800 012 322

**Women Abuse Helpline**
0800 150 150

**South African Police Services**
08600 10111

**Lifeline / National Crisis Line**
0861 322 322

**Presidential hotline**
17737

**WhatsApp**
COVID-19 Whatsapp
Say “Hi” to 0600 123 456 on stay informed.
COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS
EXPLAINED TO PARENTS OF
YOUNG CHILDREN
March 2020

UNICEF South Africa
Equity House
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Brooklyn
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Email: pretoria@unicef.org
Web: www.unicef.org/southafrica

Department of Social Development
HSRC Building
134 Pretorius Street
Pretoria
South Africa
Telephone: 012 312 7727
Web: www.dsd.gov.za

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