

# Talking to your children about coronavirus (COVID-19)

An Easy Read guide for parents and carers



## How to use this guide



The Victorian Government Department of Education and Training (VIC DET) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means VIC DET.



We have written this guide in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**. We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 22.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another guide.



You can find the other guide on our website at **our website**.



You can ask for help to read this guide. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

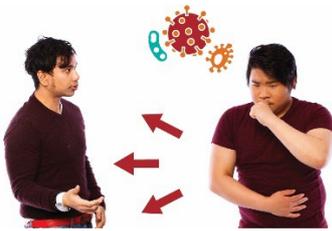
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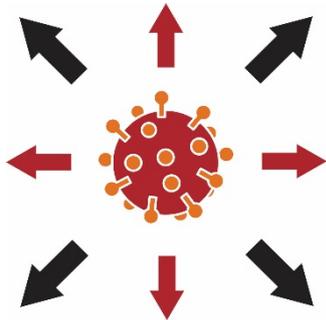
## What is coronavirus?



Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a **virus** that has affected many people around the world.



A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.



Coronavirus is spreading quickly.



Coronavirus has been called a **pandemic**.

A virus becomes a pandemic when it spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.

## Talk to your child about coronavirus



You shouldn't be scared to talk to your child about coronavirus.



Most children have already heard about coronavirus.



Not talking to your child could make them feel more worried.



You can help your child by giving them the right information.

This is better than what they may hear:



- online or through social media



- from their friends.

## Ways to talk to your child about coronavirus



We have ideas about good ways to talk to your child about coronavirus.

We explain these ideas in more detail below.

### Talk to your child in the right way

When you talk to your child:



- talk to them in a way they will understand



- use a calm voice



- be positive



- be honest.



It's ok to say if you don't know something.



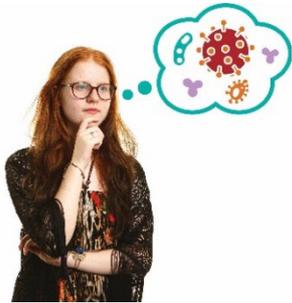
Try not to share too much information with your child at 1 time.



It's better to just give them small bits of information.

## Listen to your child

Ask your child to tell you:



- what they already know about coronavirus



- how they feel.



Let your child ask you questions.



Some children will be worried about people they care about.



Let them use technology to connect with family and friends to see that they are ok.

## Support your child

Be careful what you say when you talk about coronavirus with:



- your child



- other people.



Your child might be listening while you talk to other people.



You should also be careful about what you watch on:

- TV
- social media.



Your child might be watching these too.



Try to understand how your child feels.



It's ok for them to be scared.



Remember to talk to your child about what they have heard about coronavirus.

Tell your child that doctors and scientists around the world are working hard to:



- learn more about coronavirus



- make medicine to keep us safe.

## Talk about what you're doing to stay safe



Teach your child what they can do to protect themselves and others.

Talk about:



- washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds many times during the day



- how to sneeze or cough into a tissue or their elbow



- **social distancing.**



Social distancing means you keep space between you and other people.



Your child might ask about people wearing face masks.

You can tell your child that:



- these people are being extra careful



- they don't need to wear a face mask if they are not sick.



Remind your child to call **000** if they aren't safe.

## Stick to a routine



If children have a routine, they can be:

- happier
- healthier.



You can:

- write a routine for your family
- put it on the fridge.

Your routine can include times for:



- eating



- playing



- going outside



- using technology



- learning



- being creative.



There might be days when your child doesn't want to follow a routine.



This is ok.

Just support your child through this time.

### Keep talking to your child



Keep talking to your child about coronavirus during the pandemic.



Find out what information they've heard.



Give them the right information.



Your child might ask you a question you can't answer.



Remember, it's ok to say if you don't know something.

You can find out the answer together.



At times, your child might not want to talk about coronavirus.



Tell your child that you'll check in with them again later.

### **Check how your child is feeling**



After you have talked about coronavirus, check how your child feels.

Look out for signs they might be upset,  
such as:



- how they are talking



- how they are breathing



- how they are moving their body.



It's important not to leave your child alone  
when they are very upset.



Look out for signs that your child is upset.

They might be feeling:



- scared



- anxious



- angry



- frustrated



- confused



- sad.



They might act like coronavirus isn't real.

## Take care of yourself



It's important to take care of your own mental health during the coronavirus pandemic.



If you feel anxious, take time to calm yourself down before you talk to your child.

You can get support for your own mental health during the coronavirus pandemic from:



**Headspace**

- [Headspace](#)



**Beyond Blue**

- [Beyond Blue](#)



**Lifeline**

- [Lifeline](#).

## Find more information

You can find more information at the:



- [Raising Children Network website](#)



- [Emerging Minds website](#)



- [KidsHealth website](#)



- [eSafety Office website.](#)

If your child wants more support to deal with coronavirus, they can contact:



**Headspace**

- [Headspace](#)



**ReachOut**

- [ReachOut.](#)

You can find the latest information and advice about coronavirus at the:



- [Victorian State Government Department of Education and Training website](#)



- [Victorian State Government Department of Health and Human Services website.](#)

## Word list



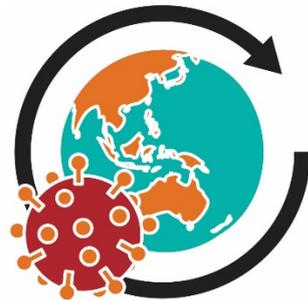
### **Pandemic**

A virus becomes a pandemic when it spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.



### **Social distancing**

Social distancing means you keep space between you and other people.



### **Virus**

A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.



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